RES NON VERBA

NUNC COGNOSCO EX PARTE

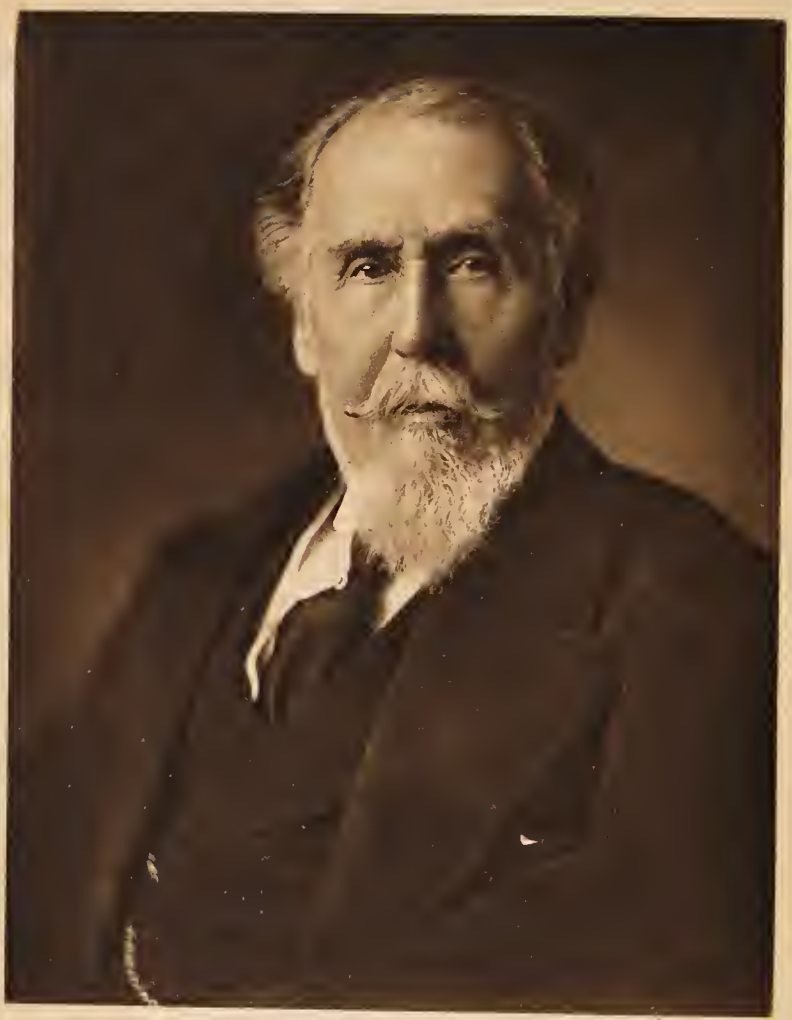
TRENT UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY

NOV 2 '57

CHAPTERS FROM MY OFFICIAL LIFE

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2019 with funding from
Kahle/Austin Foundation

https://archive.org/details/chaptersfrommyof0000wils



Swaine Photo.

C. Rivers Wilson

LONDON, EDWARD ARNOLD

CHAPTERS FROM MY OFFICIAL LIFE

BY

SIR C. RIVERS WILSON, G.C.M.G., C.B.

(President ? Grand Trunk Rly 1895-1909)

EDITED BY

EVERILDA MacALISTER

WITH PORTRAITS

LONDON
EDWARD ARNOLD
1916

All rights reserved.

DA565.W59A3

PREFACE

Most of Sir Rivers Wilson's old friends and contemporaries have passed away, and there is no one left of those who were associated with him in his early days to write an appreciation of his life's career. But Sir Rivers speaks for himself — his autobiography, which was commenced in January, 1914, at the request of his wife, and continued at various times till the very day in December, 1915, when he was attacked by the illness which was shortly to prove fatal, tells what manner of man he was.

His name will be indelibly connected with modern Egyptian history. It was largely through his efforts that Egypt gained a constitution, and he played a historic part in the closing scenes of the reign of its last despotic ruler, Ismaïl Pasha. In a letter to Lady Wilson, written after her husband's death, Lord Milner says, "I have always admired the courageous part Sir Rivers Wilson played in Egypt—long before my day it is true—under circumstances of great difficulty. My own subsequent experiences in that country enable me to estimate the troubles by which he was confronted."

Sir Rivers was a most careful writer, and took the greatest pains to ascertain the accuracy of anything he had written, but he was not accustomed

78974

to dictating, and he never had the opportunity of correcting or revising these reminiscences, which, though complete in themselves, have no end, for he had intended to write somewhat further of his later days and friendships. Several of the letters included in them have been inserted since his death, but are embodied in the text so as not to destroy its sequence. It was thought that they would add to the interest of the book, especially the letter written by Sir Rivers himself to Sir Stafford Northcote in Chapter XX, which gives such an excellent analysis of the chances of success of a European or of a Native Government in Egypt.

The reader will be sure to notice how frequently the author speaks of people as being "interesting," "delightful," or "excellent." This touch reveals Sir Rivers' own character, for to him every one was a "good fellow." He was the most kind-hearted and generous of men, and always ready to do his friends a good turn, and he suffered acutely when he met with any unkindness or ingratitude. His nature was sensitive and responsive, and the way in which he carried out his work and still retained the friendship of those who, like the Khedive Ismaïl, had suffered through his strong sense of duty and justice, proves him to have been a diplomatist of rare distinction.

Throughout the whole of his public career he was actuated by the highest principles. He might, both in Egypt and in Canada, have made very large fortunes, yet by reason of what was called his "Treasury Conscience" he never thought it right, when working in an official capacity, to take

advantage of the opportunities which frequently arose for enriching himself.

Sir Rivers used to say of himself that he was very indolent, but as a matter of fact work came so easily to him that he was enabled to get through an enormous amount in a comparatively short time. When he first went to the National Debt Office in 1873, Mr. Lowe, whose secretary he had been, wrote in a private letter to Mr. Gladstone, "I have lost Wilson, and cannot expect to find an assistant like him again—he is a man of extraordinary ability, industry, and knowledge." Owing to his modesty, Sir Rivers made very little of his personal ability, and often gave others credit for what he had done himself, but it is obvious that he enjoyed the affection as well as the confidence of his chiefs, and that, owing to his great tact and well-balanced judgment, his advice was constantly sought by many of the most eminent persons of his day. At the time of his connection with Egypt his influence there was unbounded, and when he revisited the country with his wife in 1901, he was much touched and gratified at the reception he received. He was fêted by the Prime Minister and many other Native officials in Cairo, and when he travelled up the Nile entertainments were given in his honour by the Moudirs of the principal districts. It was evident that he was still remembered for what he had done more than twenty years before to ameliorate the condition of the fellaheen.

When his day's work was over, Sir Rivers was able to throw all thoughts of business aside and enter heartily into any amusement that was going

on. He had a most sociable nature and was welcome everywhere. His charm of manner was felt by all with whom he came into contact, and his great consideration for those who worked under him, must have made him an ideal chief. Children were devoted to him, and his delight in earlier days was to take out a party of young people to some treat, which he would enjoy as much as they did.

Sir Rivers' outlook was always fresh, and he took the keenest interest in the affairs of the day. The war affected him profoundly, and he felt a very deep anxiety as to the internal government of the country. Beyond a slight deafness, he did not suffer from any of the infirmities of old age, although he had nearly completed his eighty-fifth year at the date of his death. He was always faultlessly dressed, and this characteristic, coupled with his great experience and tact, presents him as the ideal of what a British diplomat ought to be.

He had a strong sense of humour and his conversation was brilliant. His full rich voice no doubt contributed to enforce his points when necessary, but it is, unfortunately, impossible to reproduce the delightful way in which he talked. He had read enormously and miscellaneously, and had a marvellously retentive memory, which enabled him to illustrate his conversation with apt quotations or stories. He knew much of the works of Scott and Dickens by heart, also the Bible, and he delighted especially in quoting from the Psalms and the Book of Job. Of French literature, both classic and modern, he was extremely fond, and a volume of Ste. Beuve was generally to be found at his side.

In 1895—seven years after the death of his first wife, who was a Miss Caroline Cook—Sir Rivers Wilson married the Honble. Violet Mostyn. Their married life of twenty years was a most happy one. For nine years they rented Foxhills, a beautiful place near Chertsey, where they enjoyed entertaining their friends during the summer and autumn. Sir Rivers was a most kind and genial host, and many who stayed at Foxhills have delightful recollections of their visits. During the last few years of his life, Sir Rivers went out very little in general society, but he loved to see any friends who would come in for a chat, and he hardly ever missed his afternoon visit to the Garrick Club and his game of bezique. He died, after a few weeks' illness, on the 9th February, 1916, within ten days of the anniversary of his eighty-fifth birthday. He will be missed by many, both young and old, who were used to go to him—drawn by his magnetic personality—to be cheered or entertained, or sometimes to be helped with a kindly word of advice or encouragement.

VIOLET WILSON.
EVERILDA MacALISTER.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

FAMILY AND SCHOOL DAYS, 1831-1850

PAGE

Family—Preparatory School—Dieppe—Eton—Paris Revolution—Hesse Darmstadt 1

CHAPTER II

OXFORD EPISODES, 1850-1853

Balliol—Dr. Jenkins—Jowett—Drury Wake's ride—Lord Derby . 14

CHAPTER III

MY FRENCH FRIENDS, 1853-1856

Comte de Montbron—A duel—Comte de Rochechouart—Marshal Ney's execution 22

CHAPTER IV

THE TREASURY, 1856

Treasury appointment—James Wilson—Mr. Disraeli—His secretaries—James Clay 27

CHAPTER V

ROBERT LOWE, 1858-1873

George Alexander Hamilton—Robert Lowe, 1868—Deputations—The Match Tax—Numa Hartog 37

CHAPTER VI

MONETARY CONFERENCE AND *ALABAMA* CLAIMS, 1867-1871

International Monetary Conference—Royal Commission—Paris Universal Exhibition, 1867—Other exhibitions—Franco-Prussian War—*Alabama* Tribunal—Stoempfli's appointment . . . 48

CHAPTER VII

NATIONAL DEBT OFFICE, 1873

National Debt Office—Comptroller-General—Government annuities—Chelsea pensioners—Story of Gabriel Webb—Consols . . 61

CHAPTER VIII

FERDINAND DE LESSEPS

PAGE

Suez Canal shares—The Canal—Goschen—Le Grand Français—British shipowners' grievances—Arabi Pasha's revolt—L'affaire Panama—Charles de Lesseps—M. Waddington . . . 70

CHAPTER IX

MISSION TO EGYPT, 1876

Egyptian debt—Mr. Cave—Interest of the English Government—French schemes—Ismaïl Pasha—Financial intrigues—Prince of Wales' visit—Caisse de la Dette—Cave's report—French proposal adopted 81

CHAPTER X

THE MOUFFETISH, 1876

His power—Resignation—Death—Capitan Pasha—Mehemet Ali—Mr. Larking's letter 94

CHAPTER XI

FINANCIAL CHAOS IN EGYPT, 1876-1878

Goschen and Joubert—The Dual Control—Demand for an inquiry—Formation of the Commission of Inquiry 102

CHAPTER XII

COMMISSION OF INQUIRY, 1878

Interview with M. Waddington—The Commissioners—First discussion—Visit to the Suez Canal—Sir Richard Burton—Examination of witnesses—Khedive's extravagance . . . 111

CHAPTER XIII

COMMISSION OF INQUIRY (*continued*), 1878

Offer of Finance Ministry—Struggle with the Khedive—The Dairas—Chérif Pasha—Alexandria—Desmichels—Barrot . . . 124

CHAPTER XIV

COMMISSION OF INQUIRY (*continued*), 1878

Nubar Pasha—Desmichels' intrigues—Preliminary Report—Nubar's arrival—Report presented to Khedive—He accepts our conclusions—Request for my services as Finance Minister . . 145

CHAPTER XV

NUBAR PASHA

PAGE

Boghos Bey—Nubar and Ismaïl—International Tribunals—Nubar and Lord Beaconsfield—Extract from the Preliminary Report—The Khedive's Declaration—M. de Blignières—Letters of Ismaïl, Nubar and Vivian 157

CHAPTER XVI

MINISTER OF FINANCE, 1878-1879

Rothschild loan—Diplomatic difficulties—The Ministry—Support of the Powers necessary—Mr. Vivian—His attitude towards the Ministry—Khedive makes use of it—Our reforms—The cadastral survey—Collection of taxes—The Kourbash—Mr. Fitzgerald's accounts 172

CHAPTER XVII

FALL OF THE MINISTRY, 1879

Reduction of the Army—Attack on Nubar—The Khedive's complicity—Resignation of Nubar—Dismissal of the Ministers—Deposition of Ismaïl—Exile. 185

CHAPTER XVIII

GORDON PASHA

Correspondence with Gordon—Baker Pasha—Gordon's resignation—The Relief Expedition 195

CHAPTER XIX

RECOLLECTIONS OF CAIRO

Ismaïl's lavish expenditure—Saïd Pasha—Maison des Marmitons—Society—Wilfrid Blunt—My last visit 202

CHAPTER XX

COMMISSION OF LIQUIDATION, 1880

My views on the Government of Egypt—Administrative reform—European representation—Restriction of Consular interference—Success of International Ministry—Nubar's character—Other Native statesmen—Appointment of Commission—Law of Liquidation—Termination of my official connection with Egypt . 209

CHAPTER XXI

RECOLLECTIONS OF PARIS

Our Ambassadors—Lord Cowley—Lord Lyons—Lord Lytton and Lord Dufferin—Sir Edward Monson—Falconer Attlee—The Embassy—"Diplomacy"—Blowitz—Gérome—Prince de Hanault—General Boulanger 223

CHAPTER XXII

PARIS COMMERCIAL TREATY, 1881

PAGE

Treaty of 1860—Challemel de Lacour—Failure of our negotiations—Sir Robert Morier—Embassy to China—Jamaica . . . 236

CHAPTER XXIII

BRUSSELS MONETARY CONFERENCE, 1892

Bimetallism—Members of the Conference—Our opposition—Brussels—Abuse from bimetallists—Gladstone's speech—Thoughts on Mr. Gladstone—Repeal of the Income Tax . . 242

CHAPTER XXIV

MR. HUNTINGTON AND THE CENTRAL PACIFIC RAILWAY, 1894

My retirement from the Treasury—Representative of British bondholders—Mr. Huntington—Central Pacific Railway—American reporters—Armenian outrages—Washington—Success of my mission—Extract from *New York Herald* 251

CHAPTER XXV

PRESIDENCY OF THE GRAND TRUNK RAILWAY, 1895-1909

Dissatisfaction of shareholders—My nomination—Joseph Price—Visit to Canada—Reorganisation of Staff—Mr. Hays—Grand Trunk Pacific Railway—Winnipeg—Last trip to Canada—Prince Rupert—Oriental labour—My last General Meeting—Rise in Stocks 267

CHAPTER XXVI

SCULPTORS AND PICTURES

Mr. Ayrton—Wellington memorial—Alfred Stevens—Pistrucci and the Mint—Mr. W. H. Hamilton—"The Family of Darius," by Paul Veronese—The Peel collection—The Blenheim pictures . 283

CHAPTER XXVII

THE GARRICK CLUB

Its *raison d'être*—Frank Burnand—Habitués of the club—The pictures—Thackeray and Yates—Dickens 292

CHAPTER XXVIII

MY BULLDOGS

Points of the British bulldog—His nervousness—Homing instinct—My favourites, Joey and Kitty 296

INDEX 305

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Sir C. Rivers Wilson, 1910 . . . . . *Frontispiece*

Ferdinand de Lesseps with his Family, 1884 . *Facing page* 74

Ismaïl Pasha . . . . . „ „ 194

C. Rivers Wilson and "Bertha" . . . . . „ „ 298

CHAPTER I

FAMILY AND SCHOOL DAYS

1831–1850

Family—Preparatory School—Dieppe—Eton—Paris Revolution—Hesse Darmstadt.

My family originally came from the little village of Stenson in Derbyshire, which I once visited. There I found, in the churchyard, the tombs of many dead and gone Wilsons, dating back to about 1600; and I saw the old Manor House, which has descended for many generations from the fathers to the eldest sons. The younger ones, of which there were often a good many, had to seek their fortunes in the world, and one of them, Colonel Samuel Wilson, was Lord Mayor of London in 1839. On April 5th, 1839, he gave a great banquet to his relations, and to commemorate the event was presented with two silver-gilt loving-cups inscribed as follows:—

Presented
To the Right Honourable Samuel Wilson,
Lord Mayor of London,
to Commemorate an Entertainment given by
His Lordship and the Lady Mayoress
in the Egyptian Hall in the Mansion House,
on the 5th day of April, 1839,
To His Lordship's Family
at which one hundred and eleven members attended
and in remembrance alike of the Splendour and
Hospitality of the scene,
and the great kindness shewn by
The Lord Mayor and the Lady Mayoress
to their Guests.

The following notes about him were kindly sent to me by Sir William Soulsby :—

"Colonel Samuel Wilson, whom, when I was a boy, I knew very well, was an Alderman of the City of London from 1831 until 1871, when he retired. He was Sheriff in 1833, and Lord Mayor from Nov. 9th, 1838 to Nov. 8th, 1839. The family gathering to which you allude was held on April 5th, 1839, and is commemorated by two silver-gilt loving-cups. Colonel Wilson was Colonel of the City of London Militia, and "Harbinger" in Her Majesty's household. His only son died two years ago at the age of very nearly 100. The Alderman was a fine old citizen. He left a sum of money to the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and High Officers, and a considerable array of silver plate for the Mansion House. He also created a trust to accumulate in order to provide a diamond ring for every Alderman of his own particular ward in the City (Castle Baynard), who should become Lord Mayor. The ring has been twice earned since his death—once in 1891 and again this year, 1914, for the present Lord Mayor is the Alderman of Colonel Wilson's ward."

My grandfather, Thomas Wilson, was the head of one of the most important business houses in the City of London, and was one of the original founders and directors of the Alliance Assurance Company, of which my father was, and I am still, a director. There is a portrait of him, dated 1824, amongst a collection of Dighton's Caricatures, which is now in my possession. He married a Miss Homfrey, who died quite young, in Lisbon, and my father was his eldest son. Some years later he married again and lived in Portman Square, where he had a large family.

Before the death of my grandfather at a comparatively early age, my father had married a daughter of Sir Benjamin Stephenson, who was Comptroller of the Household to Queen Charlotte, and a personal friend of many of the Royal Family. They started their life in very auspicious circumstances. Sir Benjamin Stephenson was highly trusted by all the Royal Family, and it fell to him to make the arrangements when George IV. opened the tombs of the kings at St. George's Chapel, Windsor. He had a nephew, Ernest Stephenson, a wild youth, who was particularly anxious to be present on this occasion, but tried in vain to persuade his uncle to procure him the necessary permission. The ceremony took place at night, and the King and Sir Benjamin were escorted to the vault by grave diggers, muffled in cloaks and holding aloft flaming torches; but what was the amazement of Sir Benjamin when a sudden flare disclosed to him that one of the cloaks concealed the figure of his importunate nephew! As mementoes of this gruesome performance Sir Benjamin secured a tooth of Henry VIII. and a lock of hair of Charles I., which are now in the possession of his descendants.

My father, when at Brighton, was once taken by Sir Benjamin to dine with William IV., at the Pavilion, and was surprised to see the King toss off tumbler after tumbler of what he thought was sherry, but which he was afterwards informed was toast and water.

Sir Benjamin Stephenson had two old sisters (my great aunts), who, under a warrant of George III., had a large suite of over twenty rooms in Kensington Palace. They lived very simply and only occupied

two or three of them, but though in later years the Office of Works tried to get them to surrender some of these rooms, they stuck to their warrant and refused to give up even a housemaid's closet.

They were extremely proud of one of their nephews when he became a guardsman and told him that a sentry at the Palace always saluted them on his account, which was, of course, a perfect fiction. He promptly replied, "I shall at once have the sentry reported at headquarters ; he will be tried by court martial and I am afraid to think what the consequences will be." The young guardsman had afterwards a very distinguished career. He saw a great deal of service in Canada, China and Egypt, and became General Sir Frederick Stephenson, Colonel-in-Chief of the Coldstream Guards, and, finally, Constable of the Tower. He died in 1911.

I remember when I was a child, that my great aunts used to call on my mother in Montagu Square in a hackney coach, which they called their "glass coach," and that they used to apologise for leaving early, as they wanted to get home before dark on account of the footpads, who haunted the road between Hyde Park Corner and Kensington.

My father succeeded to the business after the death of his father. He was a director of the Bank of England, an admirable man of business, and had every reason to look forward to a life of prosperity. Unfortunately he associated himself with a partner who was wanting both in ability and experience and it was chiefly attributable to him that in the great financial crisis of 1837 the house of Thomas Wilson & Co. failed, together with several other of

the leading American houses. My father never recovered his financial position, but he was able to give a good education to his children, and I have always felt grateful to him for the opportunities which he enabled me to enjoy.

I was born on February 19th, 1831, in Montagu Square, London, and was the eldest of seven children. Before I was eight I was sent to a private school at Tunbridge Wells.

For my first three or four years as a schoolboy I had to travel by coach the distance of thirty-six miles, taking four hours over the journey. The school was kept by Mr. Allfrey, a well-meaning man who had been a tutor in the Russian Royal Family, had married a Russian, and called his school Romanoff House. There were about seventy boys, who were fairly well fed and taught, and kindly treated, but the life was rather hard, and I do not look back on it with much satisfaction. The terms were very long and the holidays seemed very short! There was little personal chastisement, but I have seen Mr. Allfrey thrash a boy so cruelly that even now it makes me sick to think of it, although he was not really an unkind man, and I still retain a friendly feeling towards him.

I had been for five years at Tunbridge Wells and was rising thirteen, early in 1844, when, by a happy inspiration of my parents, I was sent abroad to learn French, and went to reside in the family of M. Réville, who was the Protestant minister at Dieppe; an admirable and interesting man, loved and respected in all the neighbouring country. The complete change was a delightful emancipation. I was taken

to Dieppe by my father and his brother-in-law, Fred Stephenson, who had been a page to Queen Victoria and had just entered the Guards, and who had, some years before, himself been at M. Réville's. We travelled by Southampton and Havre, where we slept. In the diligence, the next day, we had, as travelling companion, a Colonel Campbell who had escorted the Emperor Napoleon on his journey from Fontainebleau to Elba in 1814. I lay on the floor of the coupé of the diligence and slept, but remember waking up and hearing my elders discussing the event.

I was with M. Réville ten months—some of the happiest in my life. I learnt French very rapidly and acquired a taste for French literature which I have retained ever since, and which has been a great pleasure and comfort to me. My knowledge of the language has also been of inestimable service to me in my subsequent career.

Dieppe, which I have frequently revisited, has undergone few changes since those days. It remains one of the most charming of the French seaports, with its glorious church of St. Jaques, its castle with recollections of Henri IV. standing high on the Falaise, and its old-fashioned Grand Rue and Faubourg du Pollet.

A certain amount of local colour is even retained in the costumes of the fisher-folk. Nothing can be more picturesque than the arrival of the herring-boats, laden to the gunwale with their silver freight, along the quays of the old harbour; or, than their unloading by a busy crowd of which the chief feature is formed by the women in their sabots and characteristic white caps. Some years ago, during the

administration of M. de Freycinet, large maritime basins were constructed inside the outer harbour, which are capable of accommodating a much bigger amount of shipping than has, as a matter-of-fact, ever resorted to them.

Another attraction is the surrounding country, which, with its rich pasture land and its well-to-do farms, forms one of the most prosperous, as well as one of the most beautiful portions of France. The Château d'Arques, scene of the famous battle, and the old Manoir d'Angot at Varençeville—once the residence of the great Dieppe navigator, where he was visited by François I., and still in a good state of preservation—were frequent objects for my excursions.

In the course of that summer of 1844, my father, mother and eldest sister Catherine, came over to Dieppe and took me to Paris. We posted there, and put up at the Hotel du Rhin, and that was my first visit to the capital I was afterwards to know so well.

Although a great deal had been done for Paris under Louis Philippe, the aspect of the city was very different from what it is now. There were no pavements except in the principal and central streets, and many of these were still lighted with the ancient "reverbères"—chains slung across the road with common lamps in the middle. We stayed several days, during which my parents took me to see all the principal sights and historical monuments; and when we got back to Dieppe I was encouraged by the excellent M. Réville to write an account of all I had seen. I stayed with him till December, 1844, and, when I got back to London, worked for some

months with a good private tutor, called Westmacott, to prepare for Eton, which I entered at Easter, 1845.

I went to Mrs. Edwards', one of the old-fashioned dames' houses, and my tutor was Henry Birch, afterwards tutor to the Prince of Wales (King Edward VII.).

My Eton life was uneventful. I was in the boats, and formed many pleasant friendships some of which have happily lasted to the present day. I took the Albert Prize for French, which had lately been founded by the Prince Consort, but I am afraid that I was really very idle. The attractions of the life were very great, and I was not studiously disposed.

I do not suppose that there is much difference at Eton since I left in 1848, but I am inclined to think that we were rather a hardier race of boys then. The practice of regular, almost recognised, fights took place in "sixpenny," and while I was there three or four rather sensational encounters occurred. One, which made a good deal of stir, took place at Coleridge's, between Fletcher Norton—a son of the beautiful and accomplished Mrs. Norton—and the Marquis of Bath. Bath, who probably had been a good deal spoilt at home, found himself rather out of his element at a great public school. He was a shy and timid boy and, as is often the case in such circumstances, was made somewhat of a butt by the lower boys, who had no sort of respect for rank or title. It turned out, however, that he had a great reserve of courage. He did a very unusual thing. Norton was an upper, and Bath a lower boy, both at Coleridge's. Those who know Eton, at least as it was in my time, will understand the

distinction between the two classes. There was great surprise, therefore, when Bath went to the head-boy of the house, with the unheard-of request that he might be allowed to fight Norton, by whom he had been continually and severely bullied. His request was granted, and the whole house assembled in a large room to witness the encounter. The result was a smashing defeat for Norton, and a great triumph for Bath, who from that moment acquired the respect, if not the admiration, of the entire school.

Upon hearing what had occurred, Mrs. Norton came flying down to Eton and found her Fletcher's features unmercifully mauled. She complained bitterly to Coleridge, but what could be done! Fletcher had only got what he deserved.

I met Fletcher Norton, years afterwards, when he was at the Embassy in Paris, an extremely good-looking and attractive man with, apparently, a fine career before him, but he died prematurely, to the great grief of his mother. She was with him in his last moments, as well as his father, George Norton; and at poor Fletcher's earnest request his parents were reconciled in his presence, though I believe the reconciliation was not permanent.

Mrs. Norton wrote an account of her son's death-bed in the form of a letter which was lithographed and distributed among her intimate friends in London. I saw a copy and remember it was one of the most beautiful and pathetic compositions which ever emanated from her pen. I do not think it has been included among her published works.

During my time at Eton my parents had left

England and taken up their residence in Paris, where they had a pleasant *appartement* in the Avenue d'Antin, in the Champs Elysée. I used to join them for my holidays ; and one summer they took a house at St. Germain, with gates opening on to the forest. It belonged to the Archbishop of Paris who, in 1848, was killed on the barricades during the June revolution.

In 1847 my parents' summer residence was a charming house, with a large garden, in the Avenue de Paris, at Versailles. From there I used to go up to Paris two or three days a week to read French with a tutor, and one afternoon I brought home news which had filled the town with consternation and horror, and was not unattended with political consequences. I told my mother of the murder of a well-known duchess, whose name I could not remember. My mother, from my description, concluded it must be the Duchesse de Praslin, daughter of the Maréchal Sebastiani, who lived in the Hotel Sabastiani, on the site of the present Rue de l'Elysée, Faubourg St Honoré. It was indeed the Duchesse. She was found in her bedroom, horribly hacked to death ; the bell-ropes had been cut and on the walls all round were the bloody imprints of her hands, which had been feeling for them ! The duke's valet was arrested on suspicion, but he quietly said : " Vous ferez mieux de vous adresser à mon maître." As is well known, the Duc de Praslin was arrested, but committed suicide in prison before he could be tried. It was always supposed that poison was conveyed to him with the connivance of the Duc Pasquier, the President of the Conseil d'Etat ; but there was so much mystery about

the affair that the people imagined the ends of justice were being defeated in favour of an aristocrat. This tragic occurrence, which made a tremendous sensation at the time, was undoubtedly one of the contributory causes of the downfall of the Orléans Régime.

I had just left Paris on my return to Eton, after the Christmas holidays, when, in February, 1848, the revolution broke out, which was the overthrow of Louis Philippe. Before the end of February the King had fled from Paris in a hackney coach and had arrived in England under the name of Mr. Smith. It was a humiliating flight and stood out in contrast to the more dignified retreat of Charles X. in 1830, for he, at all events, made his exit in his royal coach, escorted by his guard. It was thought at the time that the insurrection might have been subdued and this miserable collapse averted, if one of Louis Philippe's sons had placed himself at the head of the troops. Louis Philippe was received with great kindness by Queen Victoria, although she had a grievance against him on account of the Spanish marriages. She entertained him most hospitably and placed at his disposal Claremont House, Esher, where he spent the remainder of his short life.

One of the first victims of the revolution was M. Jolivet, a well-known Deputy, whose wife was a great friend of my mother's. He was shot in the Place de la Concorde, close to the Grille of the Tuilleries. My family left Paris as soon as possible and returned to England, taking a place near Maidstone called Tovil Place.

I left Eton at election, 1848, and stayed with my parents till early in 1849, when I went to Hesse

Darmstadt to learn German, and had the good fortune to stay in the family of the Prelate of Hesse Darmstadt, where I led a most enjoyable life. The aftermath of the European revolutions of 1848 was still going on, but it was peaceful at Darmstadt, although there was fighting at Baden. I remember seeing wounded prisoners brought in, and running beside their carts to get a closer look at them.

I had my stall at the theatre and opera, which I occupied every night. In the summer there were excursions with bands of other young men into the woods—the Odenwald and Bergstrasser—or to the old castles among the surrounding mountains. The society was like that of one of the small German Courts which Thackeray so loved to describe ; everybody was kind and pleasant, but nobody was rich. The only person beside the Grand Duke who kept a carriage was a retired minister. When people were invited to entertainments at the Court, the Grand Duke used to send his carriage to fetch them, but, although he might be on the friendliest terms with them in private life, the most rigid German etiquette was kept up at Court functions. Thus, my friend the Prelate, in virtue of his ecclesiastical dignity, was officially "hoffähig," but not so his wife in spite of her being privately on intimate terms with the Ducal family.

The opera was brought to a high pitch of perfection by the father of the Grand Duke of that date, who was an accomplished musician and often used to conduct the orchestra himself. It was one of the best in Germany, and the orchestra and singers were first rate, and we were able to look forward with keen

anticipation to the visits of the great European artistes, who gave occasional performances there. I acquired a special taste for the Italian operas, and enjoyed the music of all the German composers down to and including Meyerbeer; but I have never been able to accustom myself to Wagner and his school, which I candidly own is somewhat above my head, as I suspect is the case with many of his so-called admirers.

CHAPTER II

OXFORD EPISODES

1850–1853

Balliol—Dr. Jenkins—Jowett—Drury Wake's ride—Lord Derby.

I WAS at Hesse Darmstadt for nearly a year, and after spending a few months with my family in Kent, went up to Oxford in the autumn of 1850, and matriculated at Balliol. Balliol was then first in the schools, the number of its successful classmen being higher than that of any other college compared with the number of its members. It was also head of the river, and supplied several oarsmen to the University eight, and some of the hardest riders among the hunting men then at Oxford were to be found within its gates. At that time Dr. Jenkins was the Master of Balliol. He had been chiefly instrumental in raising the college to the high position it occupied. Of the tutors there were Lake (afterwards Dean of Durham), Jowett, Woolcombe, Wall, Palmer and James Riddell. Lake was not popular with the undergraduates, but his history lectures were admirable, and I, at least, am grateful to him for introducing me to Gibbon, the perusal of whose pages has been a constant pleasure to me. Woolcombe's lectures on Aristotle were dull, though no doubt very learned, while Jowett's lectures on St. Paul's epistles were characterised by his usual thoroughness and

possibly by a tinge of scepticism. *A propos* of them a story was current of an observation made by a distinguished German professor when dining one day at the high table in Hall: "Ach yes, Paul, a clayver man, I haf read his letters ——"

The undergraduates did not think that the tutors of the younger generation treated the Master quite with the respect he merited. He was an old man and held views which to the younger staff appeared old fashioned, the feeling being very much that of the up-to-date very young man for an older generation; but I remember many years afterwards at the inaugural banquet at the opening of the new Hall that the general feeling among the old Balliol men present was one of affection and regard for the memory of the "old Master."

The Master was always inclined to take a lenient view of the escapades of the students, so that there was a very good understanding between them. One night a freshman entered the college rather intoxicated, and after an altercation with the porter, knocked him down. The unfortunate youth was rusticated. Shortly afterwards in the common room of one of the colleges, someone expressed the view that the spirit of epigram was completely lost at Oxford, whereupon the old Master declared that, in his college at any rate, it still existed, and at once recited the following lines on the adventure just mentioned—

"Why was his time, already short,
Cut prematurely shorter?
'Cos first of all he floored the port,
And then he floored the porter'

I can see him now addressing the undergraduates who were standing on the turf in front of the chapel awaiting his arrival.

"Off the grass, gentlemen, off the grass. The grass was made for the eye and not for the futt."

On the death of Dr. Jenkins it was naturally expected that Jowett would be elected in his place, but as he was under the cloud of suspected heterodoxy on account of his contributions to the famous "Essays and Reviews," he was passed over in favour of Dr. Scott, the collaborator in the well-known Liddell and Scott's Greek dictionary, and it was not till some years later, when Scott was appointed to the Deanery of Rochester, that the reaction took place, and Jowett came into his own. He was elected Master of Balliol in 1870. The period, however, of his chief influence and popularity was that of his persecution. In 1865 the narrow-minded and bigoted vote of Convocation which, when he was appointed to the Professorship of Greek, refused to allow him more than the nominal stipend of £40 a year, was revoked, and a salary of £500 a year was voted instead. This liberal reaction was celebrated by a banquet given to him in London by his admirers and partisans, in recognition of his merits and in condemnation of the persecution to which he had unjustly been subjected. I was present, and have a vivid recollection of a remarkable speech made by Lord Westbury, the Lord Chancellor. After tracing his own extremely successful career, which culminated in the high post of Lord Chancellor, he speculated, in caustic and eloquent language, upon the still greater success in life he might have achieved had he been so

fortunate as to have received his education under the auspices of Dr. Jowett.

I had delightful rooms looking over Broad Street, which were a favourite rendezvous of my friends. Among the more intimate of these were George Slade, afterwards Fellow of All Souls; Billy Barton, a famous rider; the late Sir Robert Herbert; Sir John Bramston; Henry Lankester, a scholar of Balliol and one of the most brilliant men of his time, who was marked out for a great career but died prematurely; Blades, who afterwards took the name of Calverley, and whose retirement from Oxford is described in some detail in Sir Edward Chandos Leigh's interesting book of recollections recently published; Arthur Peel, the late Speaker; Robert Henley, for many years vicar of Putney; Reginald Buller, afterwards Colonel of the Grenadier Guards; and Edwin Lascelles, generally known as "Honeydew," from the tobacco he affected, which was celebrated in this couplet—

> "Don't smoke, ingenuous youth,
> But if you do,
> I recommend short clays
> And Honeydew."

All of these were Balliol men.

The sporting element, although it was very strong, did not materially interfere with the main object of University life, and at Balliol, at any rate, we could show both hard riders and hard readers. Steeplechasing was a favourite amusement, and the college drag was an important annual event. A friend of mine, Drury Wake, who had left Oxford just before

I went up, but whom I knew very well afterwards, related to me the following episode of his university career. He was a member of the fine old Northamptonshire family, and a splendid horseman. A bet was made that he would ride from Magdalen Bridge to the Marble Arch, London, and back, a distance of about 105 miles, in four hours, and he won it, with a certain amount of time in hand. All the town flocked out to Magdalen Bridge to see him come in, but being before time he was able to slip into his college almost unperceived, and to change his riding attire for the orthodox cap and gown.

He shortly received a summons to appear before the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Plumtre, Master of University College, who demanded his explanation of an occurrence which had created such a stir. Wake asked in what way he had offended, and the Vice-Chancellor replied that even upon the grounds of cruelty alone a great outrage had been committed. "Why, sir," exclaimed Wake, "you surely do not imagine that I rode the same horse the whole way!"

As a matter of fact he had ridden sixteen horses and had been splendidly mounted by Tollett, the dealer, who had relays of fresh ones waiting for him at short intervals all along the route. He never even put foot to ground as he was able to vault from the back of one horse to another.

The Vice-Chancellor then said that he had transgressed one of the statutes, which forbade gambling. Wake denied that there was any gambling in the transaction, and said that as regards the bet, he was

quite willing to give up his winnings. He had the best of the argument, but the Vice-Chancellor was all-powerful and rusticated him all the same.

My friend told me a singular incident connected with this ride He had reached Headington Hill, riding very fast, with a loose rein, knowing that he was well within his time, when, as he passed the entrance to a lane, a horseman galloped out shouting, "Come up here, Mr. Wake, come up here; this is worth a thousand pounds in our pockets." He recognised Tollett's head-man, who wished to induce him to delay arriving at his destination till the very last minute, so that he could afterwards make a fresh bet on what must be an absolute certainty. I need scarcely say that Wake told him to go to the devil.

Drury Wake, at the commencement of the Crimean War, distinguished himself by a still more wonderful ride, under very different circumstances, when carrying important despatches across the continent for Lord Stratford de Redcliffe in an almost incredible time. "This ride whereon he spent day and night, following day and night, until he arrived at the port from which he sailed for England, was one of the chief causes of the paralysis of the lower limbs which laid him on his back for twelve years and more." His nephew, Sir Herewald Wake, in answer to my inquiries on the subject, confirms the particulars as I have stated them, and I quote the above from his letter.

While I was at Oxford the distinction of "tufts" was still observed at every college, I believe, except Balliol. Undergraduate peers (chiefly members of

Christ Church), were entitled to wear silk gowns and velvet caps with a gold tassel; younger sons of the peerage and rich commoners, if their parents so wished it, wore silk gowns with silken tassels to their caps; whilst the ordinary undergraduate was distinguished by the simplicity of a stuff gown and an unadorned trencher cap. The two first classes had moreover the privilege of paying a higher price for "battels," *i.e.* provisions from the buttery, than their humbler colleagues. All these distinctions have very properly long since been done away with.

The year 1852 was memorable on account of the inauguration of Lord Derby as Chancellor of the University. I was present in the Senate house when the degrees were conferred, and have a vivid recollection of the Chancellor's reception of his son, Lord Stanley. Lord Derby was then Prime Minister, while Lord Stanley, quite a young man, held the position of Under Secretary of State in his father's government, and it was rather a pretty touch when the Chancellor welcomed him with the words: "Fili mi dilectissime."

Upon the same occasion Edwin Arnold read the Newdigate prize poem, which he had gained that year. The subject was the "Feast of Belshazzar," and it had a good reception. I can recall even at this distant period two descriptive lines which pleased the audience:

> "The clash of quivers and the ring of spears
> Make pleasant music in the soldiers' ears"

but I am not quite sure whether the author of "The Light of Asia" would have cared to recognise in

subsequent years the paternity of the last four lines:

> "That night they slew him on his father's throne,
> The deed unnoticed, and the hand unknown;
> Crownless and sceptreless Belshazzar lay,
> A robe of purple round a form of clay."

I may add that I have not seen the poem since the year 1852.

CHAPTER III

MY FRENCH FRIENDS

1853–1856

Comte de Montbron—A duel—Comte de Rochechouart—Marshal Ney's execution.

I TOOK my degree in October, 1853, and, after leaving Oxford, passed my time between London and France, as my parents were again living in Paris. From then until 1856, I was without any particular occupation. When in France I used to stay a good deal in the country with various friends, one of the closest of these being Joseph de Montbron, son of the Comte de Montbron, owner of two fine properties in the Limousin, who was, in many respects, a remarkable man. In one of his properties, Montagrier, not far from Limoges, he had some important ironworks; and during the revolution of 1848 a Republican emissary came down from Paris to try and stir up discontent and disorder among the workmen of that district. He made his appearance in M. de Montbron's village and started propagating revolutionary ideas. M. de Montbron, hearing that he was in the habit of frequenting a cabaret where he harangued the workmen, went there, and, seating himself at a table, listened to the discussion which was going on. Presently he entered into an argument with the man, purposely picking a quarrel with him, and, after

a warm interchange of words, a duel was arranged between them. The news on being disseminated, created excitement in the countryside, and hundreds turned out to watch the encounter. M. de Montbron was attended by his two eldest sons, who acted as seconds, and my friend Joseph gave me an account of what took place. The Republican fired first, but without effect. M. de Montbron then very deliberately raised his pistol and was just about to fire, when he noticed that the percussion cap was missing. Still covering his unfortunate adversary with the weapon, he quietly put his hand in his pocket, drew out a cap, fixed it on the nipple, and then shot the man through the stomach. I may mention that he was a great sportsman and a deadly shot. The wounded man recovered, I believe, but M. de Montbron was arrested and underwent a sensational trial at Limoges. M. Berryer, the famous Legitimist orator, came down to defend him, and during the course of the inquiry the judge said to the prisoner—"Mais, M. de Montbron, quelle était votre intention à l'égard de cet homme?" "Quelle était mon intention, M. le Président? Me prenez vous pour un pantin? Mon intention était de le tuer." The result of the trial was a triumphant acquittal, and nothing more was heard of revolutionary propaganda in that part of the country.

M. de Montbron was a man of striking appearance—a true type of the old Limousin gentleman, and a breeder of the horses for which that country is famous. All his sons were fine specimens of manhood and great sportsmen. One of them, Aymer, I think, was afterwards, "louvetier," and kept a pack of wolfhounds.

He asked me if I would procure a staghound to cross with his own breed, and I obtained a very fine dog from the Queen's staghounds, which was drafted on account of being above the average height of the pack. He was received with rapture by Aymer, but met with an unfortunate fate. He took to hunting on his own account and was caught and devoured by the wolves.

My friend Joseph was a most accomplished harp-player; he was the favourite pupil of Godefroi, and probably the finest amateur harpist of the day. He and I have always retained our lifelong intimacy, and, although we do not often meet, we keep up an affectionate correspondence and I still look upon him as one of my dearest friends. He continues to lead a patriarchal life in the provinces, spending his time between Montagrier in the summer, and Poitiers in the winter, and rarely, if ever, visiting Paris.

Another château where I spent a good deal of my time was Jumilliac, in the Périgord, the residence of the Comte de Rochechouart, whose son Julien was also an intimate friend. It was a building of considerable antiquity which had fallen very much out of repair, and the family only occupied a small portion of the great edifice. The Comte de Rochechouart had had a most interesting career. He belonged to the great family of Mortemart, one of the old Legitimist families. He emigrated during the revolution of 1789, entered the military service in Russia, and was attached for a long time to his uncle the Duc de Richelieu, when the latter was Governor of Odessa. He entered Paris with the Allies in 1815 and during the occupation was appointed Commandant de la

Place. He related to me how he had to perform the unpleasant duty of carrying out the execution of Marshal Ney, and mentioned a singular circumstance in connection with it. He said that the Marshal was shot at an early hour in the morning, with his back against a wall somewhere near the Luxembourg. As no publicity had been given to the execution only a very small crowd had collected, but among those present was a certain Englishman, on horseback, who had attracted some notice in Paris on account of his eccentricities. As soon as the Marshal fell this man spurred his horse through the onlookers, leapt over the body and disappeared. I afterwards found this episode mentioned in M. de Rochechouart's memoirs, published a few years ago.

The Comtesse de Rochechouart was a charming and most intelligent old lady, a daughter of Ouvrard, the famous financier and army contractor to Napoleon, who, after making a fortune and living like a prince, fell into disgrace and died a poor man. On his daughter's marriage he bought and gave her as her *dot* this property of Jumilliac. Her daughters, the Comtesse de Montalembert and the Marquise de la Grange, were two of the most delightful French women it has ever been my happiness to know. Her son, Julien, who afterwards entered the diplomatic service, would, no doubt, have attained an eminent position, had he not been cut off in mid-career, dying of yellow fever in San Domingo.

When I was passing through Paris, in 1878, to take up my post as Minister of Finance in Egypt, M. Waddington told me that he was considering whom he should send out as Consul-General to Cairo,

being extremely anxious that the selection should be that of a man who would work in harmony with the British Consul-General and myself. I have often thought, with great regret, that I might have asked him to appoint my friend, Julien de Rochechouart. I have no doubt that he would gladly have granted my request; if so circumstances might have turned out very differently, and the whole course of affairs in Egypt might have been changed.

CHAPTER IV

THE TREASURY

1856

Treasury appointment—James Wilson—Mr. Disraeli—His secretaries—James Clay.

In 1855 the system of competitive examination for entering the Civil Service was introduced, and in February, 1856, an examination was held for the first time under the new method; but the competitors were then limited to a small number who were nominated for each vacancy. Lord Palmerston, who was Prime Minister, gave me a nomination for the Treasury, and I was successful in the examination and obtained my appointment. Sir George Cornewall Lewis, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, was virtually head of the Treasury; Mr. James Wilson was the Financial Secretary, Mr. Hayter (afterwards Sir William Hayter) the Parliamentary or Patronage Secretary, and Sir Charles Trevelyan was the Permanent—or, as the office was then called, Assistant—Secretary. The Treasury had up to that time been recruited entirely by direct nomination, and in making a comparison as to the two systems—nomination and competition—my experience is, that while undoubtedly the new system has raised the average intelligence and ability of the members of the public service, I cannot say

that it has supplied better men than some of the best under the old one. Under the newer system there cannot, however, be so many absolute failures—or Q.H.B.'s (Queen's Hard Bargains) as they used to be called—as formerly. No public department of the present day could produce more able men than George Arbuthnot, Sir William Stephenson and Sir George Anderson, who presided, then, over three of the most important branches of the Treasury. Arbuthnot, who was our great Currency expert, was auditor of the Civil List, and had under his control the administration of the Woods and Forests, and the relations of the Treasury with the War Office and Admiralty. The office over which Sir William Stephenson presided dealt with the Revenue Departments, the Board of Inland Revenue, Board of Customs and the Post Office; while Sir William Anderson presided with great ability over the Financial Department specially so-called, and was the adviser and right-hand of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in matters of pure finance.

The duties of the Secretary to the Treasury are more varied, and, for that reason, heavier than those of any other head of a public department. They also require a more general experience and knowledge, the function of the Treasury being to control each section of the public service, instead of being limited to a single branch. In 1782 Mr. Edward Chamberlayne was appointed Secretary to the Treasury, and was so overcome with terror at the responsibilities of the office that he committed suicide, by throwing himself out of one of the windows. His successors have, fortunately, been made of tougher material.

I remained very few weeks in the ranks of the Treasury, as Lord Palmerston, who had taken a great interest in this first experiment, asked to see my examination papers, and being pleased with an essay I had written, suggested to Mr. Wilson, whose private secretary was then being transferred to another post, that he should appoint me in his place. From that moment I became one of the staff, and was never again attached to any particular department.

The position of private secretary has great advantages. It enables one to learn the business of all the different departments, and gives one much insight into the work of their various branches. From this multifarious experience private secretaries become qualified to undertake the most varied work, and often became most successful afterwards as heads of offices.

James Wilson was the man with the greatest natural ability for business that I have ever known, and my apprenticeship under him proved of the utmost service to me. His career was a very remarkable one. Born in Scotland, with no natural advantages of family or connections, his first commercial undertaking was not successful; but turning his attention specially to the study of financial matters and currency, he founded the *Economist* newspaper, which very soon became a leading financial organ, and has retained its high position to the present day. His writings attracted the attention of Lord John Russell, through whose influence, I believe, it was, that he entered Parliament, where he very soon made his mark. When I

knew him he was member for Devonport, one of the Government dockyards, a rather troublesome constituency at a time when there was a good deal of patronage still in existence, and constant demands from the lower class of voters for subordinate positions in the public service. Mr. Wilson handed over to me the management of these matters, and I tried, as well as I could, to conciliate the clamorous constituents, with the assistance of my friend and colleague Charles Fremantle, who was private secretary to Mr. Hayter, the Patronage Secretary.

James Wilson was sent to India in 1859, as Financial Minister of the Council. During the too short period of his career there he accomplished many useful and important reforms; his principal achievement being the imposition, in spite of great difficulties and opposition, of a system of income tax. Unfortunately he succumbed to the climate, and died within a year of his appointment. It was a singular circumstance that, having served when Financial Secretary to the Treasury with Sir Charles Trevelyan, the Permanent Secretary, with whom he had serious official differences, he again came into collision with him in India, where Sir Charles was then Governor of Madras; but in both cases Sir Charles had to give way before the strong will and superior ability of James Wilson.

One of my most interesting experiences during that period was when Mr. Disraeli was Chancellor of the Exchequer, in Lord Derby's Ministry, in 1866. Mr. Disraeli's regular private secretaries were Mr. Montague Corry, afterwards Lord Rowton, and Mr. Fremantle; but Mr. Fremantle having been

detached from his post as private secretary to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to sit as one of the Boundary Commissioners under the New Reform Act, very kindly suggested to Mr. Disraeli that I should replace him during his absence.

Charles Fremantle, now the Honourable Sir Charles Fremantle, from our Eton days down to the present time has been my best and most faithful friend, and there is no one for whom I have a more affectionate regard. He was for many years Deputy Master of the Mint, when his annual reports, full of information, were models of clearness and style, and he also, eventually, succeeded me as one of the Government Directors on the Suez Canal Board.

This appointment as private secretary procured me the privilege of being in close relations, for about a year, with that extraordinary man, Mr. Disraeli. As an official he took a very different view of his duties from any other Chancellor of the Exchequer whom I have ever known, and cared nothing for the ordinary details and daily routine of the office. He was leader of the House of Commons, and his mind and attention were largely taken up with matters of home and foreign policy. At the same time it was quite delightful to work with him, and I have many entertaining memories associated with him. He was always willing and ready to receive deputations connected with the Treasury, and his charming manner of receiving them, and of listening to what they had to say, generally sent them away content. He was extremely popular with his followers in the House, as the following episode will show. On one occasion he sent for me to come to his official room

in Downing Street, where I found him sitting with an individual who, it was apparent to me, was boring him very much. Directly I entered he introduced the gentleman, saying, "This is Mr.——," member for some obscure place in Ireland, "one of our good friends, who has come to me to complain of the treatment he has received at the hands of the Post Office. He informs me that upon a vacancy occurring in the Post Office of a place in his constituency"—naming some diminutive and absolutely unknown town or village—"the Post Office have actually, on their own initiative, made an appointment over the head, and in spite of the recommendation, of the member. Now, my dear Wilson, take Mr. —— down to your room—he will explain to you the whole circumstances of this monstrous case, and I request you to see that his grievance is remedied, even if you have to see the Postmaster General, personally—it is intolerable that a good friend and supporter like Mr. ——, should receive such treatment." Having said this he dismissed us, and as I closed the door I saw him turn back to the book he had been reading, with a sigh of relief, and I am sure he never gave another thought to the aggrieved M.P.

When I took Mr. —— to my room he was so impressed by the kindness of the great man, for whom, no doubt, from that moment he would have gone through fire and water, that he actually wept! I forget altogether what happened about the postmaster; or rather, I think, it was a post-mistress.

Mr. Disraeli had undoubtedly many attractive qualities. He was proud of his Jewish ancestry,

and was of a singularly affectionate nature. His devotion to his sister and his wife, and to his private secretary, Montague Corry, is well known.

Monty Corry, as he was always called by his friends, fully deserved the regard of his chief and the general popularity which he enjoyed in society. Very good-looking, with delightful manners, and full of kindness and unselfishness, he played a not inconsiderable part in the inside world of politics. His attractive qualities especially commended him to Mr. Disraeli, who liked to surround himself with persons of pleasing exterior. On one occasion, after receiving a visit from the secretary of one of his colleagues, he turned to Monty Corry, when the young man had left the room, and said in his deep impressive tones, "My dear Montague, never let me see that young man again—he is scarcely human."

Mr. Disraeli's previous secretary was Ralph Earle, a clever young man who had ingratiated himself with him and made himself extremely useful when he was in the House of Commons, by the assistance he gave in the backstairs management of the party. Mr. Disraeli showed him great kindness and confidence and gave him his chance of entering public life, as secretary to the Poor Law Board. It was one of the lowest steps on the parliamentary ladder, but it provided the opportunity, and, coupled with Earle's abilities, might have opened the door to a distinguished career. After Earle entered Parliament he was succeeded as private secretary by Mr. Montague Corry, but still expected to have supreme secretarial authority in Downing Street. Disappointed in this respect he became jealous of Mr. Corry, who by this

time was on intimate terms with Mr. Disraeli, and seems to have completely lost his head, for, not long afterwards, he made a violent attack in Parliament upon his late master and benefactor, to the extreme astonishment of the House of Commons. By this public act of ingratitude he at once lost his position and all future hope of advancement. He died some years afterwards, while engaged on a financial mission in Austria, under the auspices of Baron Hirsch.

Mr. Disraeli's conversation, when not in company, was delightfully frank and easy, and I personally always found him singularly open, sincere and *déboutonné;* very unlike the idea of the man of mystery, which was a character frequently attributed to him by the general public. In many talks which he had with me it seemed to be a pleasure to him to recall episodes in his early life, and the names he mentioned most frequently were those of two very different personages—Count D'Orsay and Prince Metternich. When the latter came to London in 1848, in consequence of the revolutionary events in Vienna, Mr. Disraeli was in the habit of visiting him, in the morning, in Belgrave Square and of discussing with him the political events of the day. On one occasion he had made a speech in the House of Commons which he considered to be rather a creditable performance, and on going to see Prince Metternich the next morning, he hoped he might receive some tokens of approval from the old statesman. Said Metternich: "My friend, your style of oratory reminds me of that of another distinguished and eloquent man ——." "I felt very much gratified," said Mr. Disraeli to me, "and I wondered to whom

he was comparing me. I could hardly expect he would put me on a level with Mr. Fox or Mr. Pitt, but I was running over in my mind the names of some of our orators of secondary rank, when after a pause he continued, '——yes, your style reminds me forcibly of that of Saint Augustine.'" In what respect the genius of these two great men was assimilated did not seem to be apparent to Mr. Disraeli.

My old friend, Mr. James Clay, member for Hull, was on very intimate terms with Mr. Disraeli in his youth, and related to me a good many stories of their travels together in the East. He gave me a full account of the fight at Constantinople, alluded to in Lord Redesdale's recent "Memoirs." In the hotel where they were staying there was a brutal, aggressive sort of fellow, the captain of an English sailing ship. Somehow or other he gave offence to the two travellers and used insulting language to them. Unfortunately for himself he had insulted the wrong man in James Clay, who was probably the best gentleman boxer of his day. A meeting was arranged in a large upper room of the hotel, and in the pugilistic encounter which ensued, and in which Mr. Clay gave his adversary a thorough thrashing, Mr. Disraeli acted as his second, and gave him a knee between the rounds.

When in Greece the two friends encamped one night on the Plains of Marathon, and Mr. Clay described with a good deal of humour, how Dizzy, roused from his slumbers by the attacks of certain aggressive insects, got up in a frenzy, and, in the lightest of attire, walked up and down in the

moonlight on this historic ground, trying to obtain some relief from his discomfort.

Being afterwards on opposite sides of politics, Mr. Disraeli and Mr. Clay met less frequently in later days, but always maintained friendly relations; and the following anecdote is illustrative of the real simplicity of Mr. Disraeli's character, when not acting a part in public.

In the winter of 1866–1867, Mr. Clay spent some time in Algiers, on account of his health, and when he returned Mr. Disraeli, whom he had left Chancellor of the Exchequer, had succeeded Lord Derby as Prime Minister. On the occasion of Mr. Clay's first entering the House of Commons after his absence, Mr. Disraeli beckoned to him to follow him to his room behind the Speaker's chair, and closing the door, turned to his old friend and exclaimed, "I say, Jim, my boy, what do you think of this?" It always seemed to me that without losing—for no man can really lose—this simplicity which I am convinced was part of his nature, Mr. Disraeli took a more serious view of himself and his relations to the rest of the world after he became Earl of Beaconsfield and a Knight of the Garter.

CHAPTER V

ROBERT LOWE

1858-1873

George Alexander Hamilton—Robert Lowe, 1868—Deputations—The Match Tax—Numa Hartog.

On the formation of Lord Derby's Government in 1858, Mr. George Alexander Hamilton, Member for the University of Dublin, became Financial Secretary, and I continued in my office as his private secretary. Mr. Hamilton was a very different man in every respect from his predecessor. Without possessing the remarkable financial talents of James Wilson, he had other qualities of a very high order, and his industry was indefatigable. Perhaps his one fault was that he took too much detail work upon himself, and indeed, the labours of his official life eventually shortened his career. Mr. Hamilton became Permanent Secretary in 1859, and was afterwards appointed by Mr. Gladstone as one of the Commissioners for putting into operation the provisions of the Irish Church Act, but died shortly afterwards, very much lamented. In his earlier years he had rendered great services to the Conservative party in contesting more than one parliamentary election against O'Connell, and had seriously crippled his estates in consequence.

Except for an interval of about a year when I

was with Mr. Disraeli, I remained with Mr. Hamilton until the formation of Mr. Gladstone's Government in 1868, when I became private secretary to his Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Lowe, with whom I stayed till 1873. In a memorandum left by Mr. Hamilton he kindly recommended me to Mr. Lowe in the following extract, which the Chancellor desired should be recorded at the Treasury :—

"I should be ungrateful not to notice my friend Mr. Rivers Wilson.

"It has seldom happened that an official in my position has had the advantage, for so long a period, of the services of such a man in the capacity of Private Secretary.

"In recommending him to the Chancellor of the Exchequer as his Private Secretary, I felt that I was conferring upon that distinguished Statesman the highest benefit I could render, and I cannot doubt that his varied accomplishments, his great intelligence and his excellent judgement, will be appreciated by Mr. Lowe."

When Mr. Gladstone took office in 1868 his appointment of Mr. Lowe as Chancellor of the Exchequer was looked upon as a fortunate inspiration, although it was somewhat unexpected, as Mr. Lowe's political labours had lain hitherto in other directions. Robert Lowe was at that time at the height of his reputation. His speeches in Parliament in opposition to the Reform Bill of 1866 were masterpieces of argument and eloquence, and being almost entirely in tone with the prevalent views of the "classes," had made him specially popular with society. Certainly on reading them to-day (February, 1914) when the democratic ideas which he so brilliantly combated, and the consequences of

which he anticipated and deplored, have received very wide application, it cannot be denied that he was in many respects a true prophet. As he predicted, the tendency of recent governmental efforts has been to level down, both in the House of Commons and in public life, the standard alike of intelligence and intention; and although it may undoubtedly be admitted that the radical spirit has for one of its objects the general improvement of the community, it may be doubted whether its achievements in this direction have met with the success which might have attended a higher form of governmental principle.

Mr. Lowe's real character has been greatly misunderstood. A general favourite in society, possessing many true friends, the most agreeable of companions and singularly adaptable, he was unfairly judged by the general public, and was not popular in official or party life. His manner, combined with the disadvantage at which he was placed by the physical disability of defective eyesight, made him appear a totally different man in public life, and especially in the House of Commons, from what he was in private.

I, personally, received nothing but kindness from him; he took the greatest interest in my subsequent career, and we remained on friendly terms until his death in 1892. The following note which he wrote me in 1872, I insert as being particularly characteristic :—

"My Dear Wilson,

"I don't care a rush for the indiscretion or the disrespect. People are quite welcome to laugh at me as I am, I fear, always ready to laugh at them. I shall be

very glad to see you back. I have some very pretty quarrels on hand which I hope you will not allow to disturb your equanimity. Always

"Most truly yours,
"Robert Lowe."

Mr. Lowe never used unnecessary words, and in debate, in the House of Commons, he argued a question strictly on its merits in the most concise terms, without using any of the artifices of conciliation. *À propos* of his power of condensation, Delane, the editor of the *Times*, to which at one time he was a regular contributor, used to complain that he compressed into a single article matter which might have served for several. He made himself enemies also by the curt and incisive manner in which he dealt with his adversaries in the course of discussion, and his wit was so sharp and spontaneous that it was difficult for him to restrain it. On one occasion when he and his first wife were present at a wedding breakfast at Lady Waldegrave's at Strawberry Hill, the conversation turned on the conditions imposed by the marriage service, and Mrs. Lowe remarked with considerable emphasis: "Can anything be more absurd than for the bridegroom to declare, 'With all my worldly goods I thee endow,' when he may be an absolute pauper. Why when I married Robert he was quite a poor man; all the wealth he was endowed with was his great intellect." "And no one can say I endowed you with that, my dear," cut in Mr. Lowe somewhat unkindly. The retort was irresistible, but it is only fair to say that it was not applicable as Mrs. Lowe was a woman of considerable intelligence, and a useful and excellent wife.

Most unjustly the Chancellor had obtained the reputation of being rude to the deputations which constantly waited upon him, and in this respect he differed materially from other ministers. I have had the advantage of being frequently present when deputations were being received by Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Disraeli. Mr. Gladstone, who always received his deputations with great courtesy and urbanity, would, with that earnestness which characterised him, invite general discussion with the separate members, and would argue with them at some length before making his final reply. Mr. Disraeli had a manner all his own, which is difficult to describe but which almost invariably gave satisfaction, even if the deputation failed to extract any concession from him. Mr. Lowe's habit on the other hand was, after hearing the views of the leader of the deputation and any others who chose to speak, to dissect and analyse minutely the statements which had been laid before him, as it was his duty as guardian of the public purse to scrutinise all claims submitted to the Treasury, and to find reasons for refusing them. This he did without any useless flowers of rhetoric and in perfectly courteous terms, but leaving the deputation with the feeling that they had made themselves ridiculous.

I remember that once, when Mr. Lowe had declined a request made by a deputation, as the members filed out of the room, the last man came back with a malignant expression upon his face, and shook his fist at the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I can attest, however, that the deputation had been received with perfect politeness.

Downing Street had periodical visits from representatives of the brewing interest. One day a number of leading brewers called to complain of the hardships of having to pay, in addition to all the heavy imposts affecting the brewing trade, a tax of so much upon each barrel of beer brewed. Mr. Lowe did not entertain much sympathy with this wealthy class of taxpayers, and did not hold out any great prospect of relief in this particular instance. Mr. Pryor had stated the case on behalf of the deputation, and Mr. Lowe had replied, when Mr. Bass, pushing himself to the front, uttered a vehement protest against the Government view, and the hardships to the brewers. It so happened that Mr. Bass and Mr. Lowe were very old friends, and the Chancellor answered him: "My dear Mr. Bass, I think the last time you did me the pleasure of waiting upon me, you informed me that you paid a tax of so much, upon so many barrels; may I ask what is the number you pay upon now?" Mr. Bass replied, naming a very considerable increase in barrels (I forget the exact figure). Then said Mr. Lowe promptly, "I congratulate you upon the great expansion of your business!" upon which all the other brewers burst into laughter.

One of the best remembered episodes of Mr. Lowe's career at the Treasury is his proposed imposition of a match tax in 1871. The idea was certainly unpopular at the time, and did some damage to the Government. Wagon-loads of women with banners from Bryant and May's factory came down to the House of Commons with petitions against the tax, in the belief that they would be thrown out of employment, and the large crowds which collected sympathised strongly with

them. The feeling against the Chancellor was so hostile that the police advised him to go by a circuitous route to the House, instead of walking there from Downing Street. I therefore arranged to go with him by the underground railway from St. James' Park Station to Westminster, and we went under police protection. This occurrence is typical of the extreme difficulty which a finance minister has in carrying a new tax ; the public always shies at the idea of any innovation, but will submit with more or less patience to the increase in a tax to which it is accustomed, whether it be on tea, sugar, or any other article already under taxation.

The match tax, as is well known, was abandoned, but the opposition was really factitious and sentimental, and if Mr. Gladstone had, as might have been expected, supported his colleague, I think there is little doubt that it would have been passed by the House of Commons, and would have eventually been accepted with equanimity by the public.

Professor Jevons, the distinguished political economist, wrote an interesting pamphlet entitled : "The Match Tax, a Problem in Finance," in which he made a careful inquiry into the merits and demerits of the proposed measure, and his conclusions were generally favourable to it. His view was that "Judged according to the principles of economy and taxation, the proposed tax is free from any fundamental objection, and ought not to be rejected because it falls upon one of the necessaries of life." "That it is remarkably free from technical difficulties, and would not be costly in collection." That "while it would create a temporary disturbance

in the match trade, and throw out of employment a considerable portion of persons engaged in the manufacture" . . . "it is well fitted to draw a small contribution to the revenue from the very large part of the populace who are exempted from direct taxes."

It was the intention of the financial advisers of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to collect the tax in the form of a halfpenny stamp attached to each box, bearing the legend, "Ex luce lucellum"—out of light a little profit. The epigram is still remembered:

"Ex luce lucellum
We all of us know,
But if Lucy can't sell 'em,
How then, Mr. Lowe?"

Immediately on taking office Mr. Gladstone addressed a letter to Mr. Lowe, setting forth at length and in considerable detail for the information and guidance of his new Chancellor of the Exchequer, what should be the financial policy of the Government, and explaining the various reforms and measures which he had had in contemplation in the event of himself having again to take charge of the Exchequer. This letter was a sort of lode star to Mr. Lowe, who kept it by him and constantly referred to it, and the fact that he was able to give effect almost in its entirety to the programme of Mr. Gladstone, is sufficient vindication of his success as a finance minister, which has sometimes been questioned, chiefly in consequence of his failure to carry the unfortunate but entirely defensible match tax.

One of Mr. Lowe's great friends was Baroness Meyer Rothschild, who was an extremely charitable

woman, and did much for the establishment and maintenance of schools for the education of poor Jews. She once asked his assistance for the case of a young Jew in whom she took an interest, whose name was Numa Hartog. He had passed through a course of education in which he had shown talents of quite an exceptional order, having taken every prize for which he had competed. Eventually he went to Cambridge where he became Senior Wrangler. He had no doubt received some assistance from his patroness, and had held some scholarships, but these had now expired, and he was cast upon his own resources. It would be thought that a man of such remarkable attainments would have no difficulty in finding remunerative employment, but as he failed to do so, Baroness Meyer asked Mr. Lowe if he could help him in any way. Mr. Lowe requested me to see what could be done for him and accordingly I sent for the young man.

I found him to be a timid, retiring little man, very modest, and apparently unconscious of his mental superiority. I asked him what was his difficulty, and why, failing other opportunities, he did not seek a good tutorship, as there must be many fathers who would be pleased to have such a man to undertake the education of their sons. He told me that he had tried in that direction, but that no one would engage him because, as a Senior Wrangler, they considered him too good for such a post. He assured me he was in such extremities that he would take anything that would bring him in enough to live on. I told him that there was nothing worthy of his acceptance at the disposal of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and

that I could not think of offering him the only employment which occurred to me at the moment, which was an extra clerkship in the Record Office at thirty shillings a week. Numa Hartog, however, accepted it with gratitude, and some weeks afterwards when Mr. Lowe and I paid an official visit to the Record Office, we found the poor little man in his shirt sleeves, sorting old documents. Mr. Lowe, shocked at such a waste of talent, asked Sir Henry Thring (afterwards Lord Thring) the Government draughtsman, to give him employment in his office, where the work required a very high order of ability. Numa Hartog was transferred accordingly to Thring's office where he worked most satisfactorily, but his career unfortunately was cut short by an early death.

In private life Mr. Lowe was certainly one of the most agreeable companions. His memory was astonishing. The scope of his reading was almost unlimited, and it is marvellous how much he retained of what he read. Sydney Smith called Lord Macaulay "a book in breeches," and this might be said at least in the same degree of Mr. Lowe. Mr. Clay, to whom I have already referred, told me that he once discussed with Sir George Cornewall Lewis the imaginary case of either of them being imprisoned on a desert island and having to choose one companion. Mr. Clay selected Mr. Disraeli; Sir George without hesitation chose Mr. Lowe. With him he would have had not only a fellow prisoner of extraordinary originality of conversation, but also a living library.

The popular idea of Mr. Lowe was not, as I said before, that of his friends, and was expressed rather

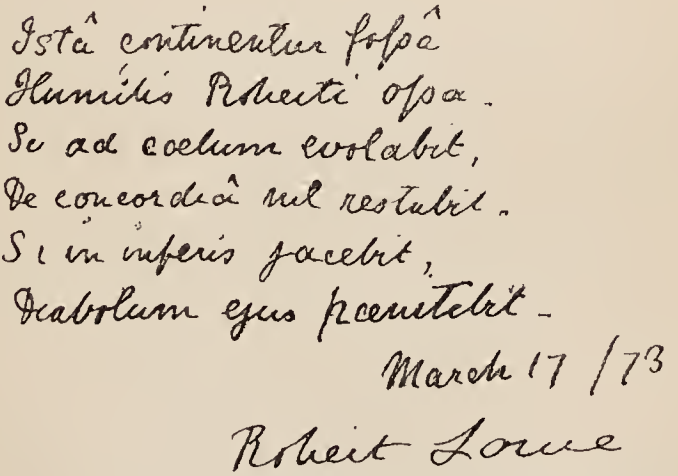
unkindly in the well-known epitaph, written during his tenure of the Chancellorship of the Exchequer.

"Here lies poor old Robert Lowe,
Where he's gone to we don't know.
If to the realms of peace and love
Farewell to happiness above;
If haply to some lower level
We can't congratulate the devil!"

Instead of being affronted with this character sketch Mr. Lowe at once translated it into Latin:

"Istâ continentur fossâ
Humilis Roberti ossa;
Si ad cœlum evolabit
De concordiâ nil restabit;
Si in inferis jacebit
Diabolum ejus pœnitebit."

I give the version I have by me, which is in Mr. Lowe's own handwriting, and is dated March 17th, 1873.



[Note.—I find that several of the above anecdotes are embodied in Mr. A. Patchett Martin's "Life of Lord Sherbrooke," published 1893; but I retain them here as they were most of them given to Mr. Martin by Sir Rivers Wilson.—Ed.]

CHAPTER VI

MONETARY CONFERENCE AND *ALABAMA* CLAIMS

1867–1871

International Monetary Conference—Royal Commission—Paris Universal Exhibition, 1867—Other exhibitions—Franco-Prussian War—*Alabama* Tribunal—Stoempfli's appointment.

In 1867 I was appointed, together with Dr. Graham, the Master of the Mint, a delegate on the International Monetary Conference held in Paris, to consider the possibility of the introduction of a system of international coinage. The invitation to the conference emanated from the French Government, and its objects were stated to be the discussion of the means by which a complete, or partial, uniformity might be established between the various monetary systems then in existence in the countries of Europe and in the United States of America.

The conference was attended by representatives from twenty different states, and the meetings were held at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs on the Quai D'Orsay. It was formally opened by the Marquis de Moustier, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and was afterwards presided over by M. de Parieu, Vice-President, and afterwards President, of the Conseil D'Etat, and one of the ministers of the Emperor Napoleon III., and, during the latest meetings, by Prince Napoleon.

Steps had already been taken in the direction of uniformity of coinage by the Convention of the 23rd December, 1865, concluded between the Governments of France, Belgium, Italy, and Switzerland, and afterwards joined by Greece. The English Government, while acknowledging the great and general value of the question, and consenting therefore to take part in the examination of it, instructed its representatives to refrain from any act or opinion which might appear to pledge it to the adoption of any particular course of action. Similar instructions, indeed, seem to have been given by all the other countries to their representatives; the proceedings, therefore, although valuable as ventilating the merits of what might become a measure of far-reaching importance, had merely an academic interest.

A singular feature in the deliberations was a unanimous declaration in favour of a single, and a gold standard. Such a declaration could hardly have been expected from an assembly where the three systems of a gold, a silver, and a double standard were represented, and the significance of the decision will be the better appreciated when it is borne in mind that only two of the states, namely Great Britain and Portugal, possessed exclusively a gold standard, and that the relative advantages of a single or a double standard had quite recently been examined by a Government Commission in France, composed of eminent economists, who pronounced by a majority of voices in favour of maintaining the double standard. The adhesion of the French representatives on the present occasion to the principle of the single standard was attributable to M. de Parieu, whose

views upon that question were very strong, and had for a long time been promulgated with great ability.

A good deal of discussion turned upon including in the general scheme a coin equivalent to twenty-five francs, with the view, especially, of securing the adhesion of Great Britain, and various ingenious suggestions were brought forward for equalising the pound sterling with twenty-five francs of French gold. It was hoped that by such an arrangement an alliance might be effected between the English monetary system and that adopted in 1865 by so large a portion of the continent of Europe, which, it was expected, would receive still wider extension.

The difficulty lay, of course, in the difference of value between the English sovereign and that of such a piece of twenty-five francs: which is, as nearly as possible, twenty centimes, or twopence, in favour of the English coin. To equalise these two pieces it would be necessary to diminish the value of the pound sterling by twopence, and to substitute for the present sovereign a coin reduced in fineness from $\frac{1}{12}$ to $\frac{1}{10}$ alloy.

As might have been expected we did not support such an expedient, which would certainly be inadmissible in England, and could only be carried out at the cost of a recoinage of our whole gold currency, estimated at from £80,000,000 to £120,000,000.

Another suggestion by which the difficulty in the weights of the two coins might be avoided was the imposition of a mint charge, or "seignorage" on the sovereign of, say, twopence, thereby correcting the difference in value of the two coins; a mint charge, or "brassage," being already imposed by the

French mint upon the coinage of gold. This proposal came subsequently under the notice of the Royal Commission on International Coinage, and formed the subject of a lively controversy in which Mr. Lowe took a prominent part.

On our return to England Dr. Graham and I presented a report to the Treasury. In the following year a Royal Commission was appointed, and was directed "to examine and report upon the recommendations of the International Monetary Conference and their adaptability to the circumstances of the United Kingdom, and whether it would be desirable to make any, and what changes in the coinage of the United Kingdom, in order to establish either wholly or partially such uniformity as the Conference had in contemplation."

The Commission was appointed really out of compliment to the French Government, who had first started the idea of the Conference; and although nothing came, and was likely to come of it, it was of very great interest owing chiefly to the many able men who took part in it. The chairman was Lord Halifax, who had been Chancellor of the Exchequer, First Lord of the Admiralty, Secretary for India, etc., a man of great influence, who might have made a much higher mark had he not been a very ineffective speaker. The work of the Commission was particularly congenial to him, in fact I may say that he revelled in it. Amongst the members was Baron Lionel de Rothschild whom I met then for the first time. We became great friends, and this led indirectly to his connection with Egyptian affairs which afterwards had such important results.

In that year I also made the acquaintance of Alfred de Rothschild, one of the kindest and most generous of men, who has been my dear friend for nearly fifty years. As a very slight instance of the manner in which he was always seeking to do good I remember that once, when I was staying at Halton with him during a very hard winter, he gave employment to all the able-bodied men in the neighbourhood by finding work for them to do in his grounds. Each man was presented with a great coat, and provided every day with a basin of soup. Such kindly acts are indeed typical of the whole Rothschild family.

The consideration of the problem of the coinage was brought to an abrupt conclusion by the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870. One of the first economic questions which came up for examination as the result of the constitution of the new German Empire was the settlement of a fresh currency system for United Germany. I have often thought that a great opportunity was lost by the advocates of an international coinage when they abstained from urging upon the German Imperial Government an adherence to one of the three existing systems which had been under consideration at the Paris Conference of 1867. Had Prince Bismarck thrown into the balance the weight of his authority in favour of the adoption of the franc, the pound sterling, or the dollar, as the basis for the new German coinage, it is not unlikely that a general agreement might have been arrived at. Unfortunately it was decided to adopt an entirely new unit, namely, the mark. The introduction of this further element of complexity rendered it impossible to hope for a result favourable to the ideas

of the promoters of the Paris Conference, and it is hardly likely that the question will, in existing circumstances, again take any practical form.

In the same year in which I attended the Monetary Conference in Paris, I acted as a juror upon several classes of exhibits in the Paris Universal Exhibition, one of the last interesting events of the declining Empire. A class with which I had more particularly to deal was that connected with printing and engraving, which brought me into communication with leading firms such as Clowes, Goupel, and Mame, whose establishment I visited at Tours. My notes and observations were afterwards passed on to the Revd. Mr. Brookfield, who embodied them in reports to the Commissioners of the Exhibition. I was present at the ceremony for the distribution of prizes at the close of the Exhibition which was held in the great building, since destroyed, in the Champs Elysées. It was an imposing sight. The Emperor and Empress presided on raised seats under a canopy, and all the notabilities of the Empire were present, together with the Corps Diplomatique and numbers of distinguished foreigners. A gold medal had been awarded to the Emperor for his exhibit of improved workmen's dwellings. When the award was announced the medal was handed to the young Prince Imperial, who ran up the steps to his parents and gracefully handed the medal to his father who embraced him most affectionately. It was a pretty and pathetic scene. These were the last and not least splendid days of the Empire. Paris was filled with crowned heads ; fêtes were given at the palace, by the municipality and by various ministers. The actress Schneider

was then the rage in her famous part of the "Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein." One day she presented herself in her beautifully appointed barouche at the special entrance to the exhibition reserved for royalties and other high dignitaries. The guardians, before opening the gates, inquired of the lacqueys the name of the eminent personage in the carriage? "La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein," was the reply, and the gates were immediately flung open!

The Khedive Ismaël, whose acquaintance I was to make shortly afterwards, was a prominent figure in Paris, and many stories were told of his generosity and extravagance. A very beautiful collection of ancient Egyptian Art was one of the most attractive features of the exhibition. It contained amongst other objects a necklace taken from one of the tombs, which had evidently been worn by some princess in ages past. Its workmanship was of exquisite beauty, and, it was said, could not be equalled by that of any jewellery of the present day. The Empress Eugenie expressed great admiration for it, and the Khedive at once gallantly presented it to her. Nubar Pasha, who was in Paris at the time, privately but strongly remonstrated against the alienation of this unique treasure, and the ornament was returned by Her Majesty. I believe that it is now at the museum at Ghizeh.

Amidst all the brilliant festivities of the moment I have a distinct recollection of the cloud of gloom and foreboding which seemed to hang over the political situation, and was reflected in the minds of all the participants in those gay proceedings. The Luxembourg difficulty had almost created a crisis,

and the news of the execution of the unfortunate Emperor Maximilian fell as a thunderbolt on the Imperial Court. Two years later the Emperor of the French and his dynasty had fallen.

I was connected subsequently with two other exhibitions held in Paris. In that of 1878 I took a somewhat active part in the arrangements for the establishment of the English section, in collaboration with Sir Philip Cunliffe Owen, the Director of the South Kensington Museum, but to my regret my work was cut short by my mission to Egypt on the Commission of Inquiry.

I was one of the Commissioners of the great Paris Exhibition of 1900 under the presidency of the Prince of Wales (H.M. King Edward VII.), who took special interest in the success of the English section. He was good enough to ask me to act as President of the Finance Committee, the secretary of which was Colonel Jekyll, now Sir Herbert Jekyll, who did admirable work. Unlike many officials in such a situation, he looked to economy as well as efficiency in his administration, the result being that I reported to King Edward in 1901 that, at the close of the exhibition, we had been able to surrender to the Treasury a considerable portion of the subsidy voted by the House of Commons. My Treasury instincts led me to congratulate our Committee upon this consummation, which was, within my experience, unheard of in the history of public Commissions. King Edward asked me to thank the members of the Finance Committee through whose excellent management such a satisfactory result had been obtained, but I must say that I never received any other credit for

my well intentioned endeavours, which were to the contrary rather derided.

There was a good deal of bad feeling between France and England just then, and the attendance of English visitors was not so great as might have been expected in ordinary circumstances; this perhaps may have been the cause why the exhibition was less brilliant than some of its predecessors. There was also a feeling that the public was weary of these repeated exhibitions at short intervals, and that commercial interests were no longer materially served by them.

A few weeks before the Franco-Prussian War broke out I was staying with my brother-in-law, Baron de Moidrey, who was a Captain in the Artillery of the Imperial Guard, at the camp of Chalons. I was present at a good deal of the manœuvring that was going on, and was greatly impressed with the smartness and apparent efficiency of the French troops. I was a perfect ignoramus on military matters, but on the strength of my observations I expressed my opinion, when hostilities broke out, that the French soldiers would march straight to Berlin without any difficulty, and I am bound to say that this view was shared by many people far more competent than myself to form a judgment.

My brother-in-law de Moidrey served with distinction all through the war. After the entry of the Versailles troops into Paris and the destruction of the Commune, he was a member of the court martial which tried Colonel Rossel, the Colonel of Artillery who became a prominent member of the Commune and turned his guns against the regular

troops. De Moidrey, as an old brother officer of his, was greatly distressed at the painful duty imposed upon him, and I have a most disagreeable recollection of the trial, at one of the sittings of which I was present. As is well known Rossel was condemned, and shot on the Plain of Satory. My brother-in-law shortly afterwards fell ill of typhoid fever and died. His end was undoubtedly accelerated by the state of unhappiness and depression into which he fell through his grief at the degradation of France, added to all the horrors which he had gone through during the war. He was a fine officer and one of the most amiable characters I have ever known, and I felt his loss very much.

Of the war itself I saw very little. Although I was abroad in the summer of 1870 I was no nearer the scene of action than Offenburg, on the German side of the Rhine, whence I saw and heard the bombardment of Strasburg, and I remember visiting the military hospitals at Darmstadt, which were, I believe, established and most admirably managed by our Princess Alice.

In the summer of 1871 I again took a holiday abroad, in the course of which I visited Berne and stayed for some weeks with my friend Hildyard, one of the members of the Legation, our Minister being then Mr. Bonar. It so happened that during my stay it became the duty of the Minister to ascertain from the President of the Confederacy the name of the proposed member of the tribunal which had just been constituted for the settlement of the *Alabama* Claims, and which was to meet at Geneva. This tribunal was to be composed of five arbitrators representing

respectively Great Britain, the United States, Italy, Switzerland, and Brazil. The Swiss Government had not actually selected their representative, but it was known that a certain M. Stoempfli, a former President of the Confederation, was a candidate and likely to receive the appointment. M. Stoempfli was well known as being unfriendly to England and a violent partisan of the United States, and therefore would be a most undesirable element in a tribunal of which the three neutral members were bound to approach the question from an impartial standpoint. I learnt confidentially that the Swiss Government would be quite willing to nominate some other person should the appointment of M. Stoempfli be unacceptable to the English Government. These facts were also known to Mr. Gerald Gould, the Secretary of Legation, and I strongly urged him to press his chief to take some steps for preventing so unfortunate a selection. Mr. Gould, though much impressed with the urgency of the case, hesitated to interfere with the Minister, who was a pompous person and extremely tenacious of his authority, and with whom he was not on the best of terms. He suggested that I, being very good friends with Mr. Bonar, should speak to him myself. I did so with some trepidation, being of course an entirely unauthorised person, but at the same time I was an official, and, what was more to the purpose, a Treasury official. I reminded him of Stoempfli's well known prejudices, and the danger, consequently, to British interests, and he replied in characteristic style, "My dear Wilson, do you suppose that Her Majesty's Minister can lend himself to an intrigue and interfere with the free choice of a person who is to exercise

judicial functions in this matter?" I told him that I had it upon excellent authority—which was true—that if he could, without taking any active steps, or using diplomatic pressure, cause it to be conveyed indirectly to the President of the Confederation that Stoempfli would be unacceptable to the English Government, some other appointment would be made.

I then took upon myself to write home to Mr. Lowe, and also to my friend Lord Tenterden, the Permanent Under-Secretary to the Foreign Office, relating the circumstances of the case. I believe they both submitted my letters to Lord Granville, but they were no doubt looked upon as an impertinent interference by an outsider, and probably thrown into the wastepaper basket; at all events Bonar does not seem to have received any instructions from the Foreign Office, and Stoempfli was appointed.

The expectation of the course he would pursue during the arbitration was entirely fulfilled, and I had the satisfaction some time afterwards of hearing Sir Alexander Cockburn, who knew nothing of what I have just stated, declare that Stoempfli's action had added £1,000,000 to the amount of the compensation eventually awarded to the United States, which was $15,500,000, or £3,100,000. I have always understood that when the money came to be distributed no more than £2,000,000 of claims were substantiated and paid, but I have never heard that the balance was refunded to the Treasury by the Government of the United States. The Foreign Office discovered their mistake when it was too late, and Mr. Bonar was withdrawn from his post and left the diplomatic service. He afterwards called upon me in London

and expressed his great regret for not having listened to me. I may add that the most appropriate selection would undoubtedly have been that of Dr. Koenig, a well-known professor of high character and an acknowledged authority on international law. This is confirmed by my friend, Sir William Haggard, who was living in Berne at the time, and used his best endeavours to get Dr. Koenig appointed.

CHAPTER VII

NATIONAL DEBT OFFICE

1873

National Debt Office—Comptroller-General—Government annuities—Chelsea pensioners—Story of Gabriel Webb—Consols.

In 1873 the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Lowe, gave me the appointment of Comptroller-General of the National Debt, in succession to Sir Alexander Spearman, who had held the office for many years, having previously been, over a long period, Secretary to the Treasury. Sir Alexander Spearman was an excellent public servant and highly esteemed by Mr. Gladstone. He was one of the old school and always wore a *jabot* or frilled shirt front. Just before he died and shortly after my appointment, I called upon him at Hanwell, where he had a pretty little estate. I found him in bed and he evidently had not long to live, but I can recall with what interest he discussed the, to him, extraordinary advancement of Mr. Disraeli who had just followed Mr. Gladstone as Prime Minister. Such an idea was altogether outside the sphere of his imagination. He related to me the first occasion on which he met Mr. Disraeli. It was at dinner at the house of Mr. Planter, the Secretary to the Treasury, and the whole party had assembled except Mr. Disraeli, who was late. The

door opened and he entered. "God in heaven!" exclaimed the old man, throwing up his arm, "if I lived to be a thousand years I should never forget that apparition"; and then he went on to describe the velvet suit, the gorgeous rings, the flowing locks, which then distinguished the future Earl of Beaconsfield. His old-fashioned official ideas were shocked even in his last moments to think that the fantastic being of his recollection should be reigning in Downing Street in the seat of Mr. Pitt.

I was at the National Debt Office for twenty years, my title being "Comptroller-General and Secretary to the Commissioners for the reduction of the National Debt"; but although theoretically the administration of the office was vested in a Commission, the only Commissioners who really acted, were the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with whom I was in constant communication, and the Governor and Deputy-Governor of the Bank of England. The other statutory Commissioners, the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Master of the Rolls, the Lord Chief Justice, and the Paymaster-General, never acted in any way whatever.

The duties of the Governor and Deputy-Governor of the Bank were confined to signing a few official documents, and the whole power was exercised by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to whom the Comptroller-General looked exclusively for instructions. The composition of the Commission is the same, almost, as that laid down in Mr. Pitt's first Acts relating to the reduction of the National Debt in 1786, but, it may be added that, whatever may have been the case in the early years of the office, certainly

the Commissioners never once within the memory of man met at a Board.

It must be conceded, however, that the existence of these shadowy Boards, such as that of the Treasury or the Board of Trade, is not without its advantages. The humblest applicant to the Treasury receives an answer from the Secretary to the Treasury, in the following formula: "I am directed by the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury to inform you that your communication has been under the consideration of the Board, and their Lordships desire me," etc., and the petitioner is much impressed, if not intimidated, by a communication from such high personages. Occasionally a rejected suitor, or it may be the representative of some public body, whose application has been refused, has called upon the Private Secretary, timidly expressing the hope that he may have the privilege of laying his case personally before their Lordships.

It would be the duty of the Private Secretary to appear horrified at the audacity of the proposal, but he would intimate that it might be arranged for him to see the Secretary, who would lay the matter before their Lordships. The applicant, overwhelmed by the importance of the Board, would then retire, amazed at his own boldness in trying to approach these dignified and mysterious beings. He might afterwards hear that his request could not be acceded to, because it might open a "serious door"—a favourite Treasury phrase which has sometimes provoked a smile.

The National Debt Office, originally established for the management of the Sinking Fund created by

Mr. Pitt in 1786, had in course of time other duties imposed upon it, and its business became of a multifarious character. By Act IV., George IV., the management of the funds of all the savings banks and Friendly Societies, and subsequently of the Post Office Savings Bank, was entrusted to it. Other Departments included the administration of the Irish Church Funds, the Irish Land Fund, the Sale of Government Annuities, etc.

The staff of the office in my time was extremely efficient, and most zealous and devoted in the performance of duty, and I know it still retains the same high character. One of the most useful members was the Government Actuary, who prepared the Tables upon which are based the rates of the Government Life Annuities, and revised them from time to time upon the observations of mortality over a prescribed period.

The post was held in succession by three distinguished members of the Finlayson family—grandfather, father and son—and for a long time the Tables of the elder Finlayson, as well as what were known as the "Carlisle Tables," were the standard employed by all the insurance offices. During my tenure of office a very full set of observations and revised tables, was prepared by Mr. Alexander G. Finlayson, the youngest of the three, based upon the experience of the lives which had passed through the office. I may mention one piece of work which Mr. Finlayson had to do, as it exposes the carelessness which may continue undetected in a public office unless accidentally brought to light. An inquiry was instituted into the administration of the office of the Chelsea

Pensioners, and the Government Actuary was directed to make a report. The result was that he arrived at the startling discovery that the average life of a Chelsea Pensioner was 135 years!

It turned out, in a large number of cases, that after the old pensioner had died, his relatives were in the habit, quite as a matter of course, of presenting themselves and drawing his pension, without any detection on the part of the office. I do not remember whether any punishment was inflicted on the delinquents, but the Department was reorganised and put upon a proper footing.

When the sale of Government Annuities was first introduced, the Tables, as I have said, were based upon the *average* life of the community; but as people were not inclined to sink their money in an annuity unless they had the prospect of living a long time, it followed that persons presenting themselves for the purchase of annuities were "picked" lives, having expectancy to live beyond the average duration. This was naturally to the advantage of the annuitant and the detriment of the Government, and certain clever people discovered the flaw in the scheme and set to work to use it for their own benefit. Under the early Acts the purchase of a Life Annuity was not restricted to the person upon whose life it depended. Any number of beneficiaries might buy annuities on the life of the same person, although he himself was not interested. Government annuities soon became a favourite form of investment of insurance companies, and agents were employed in the singular practice of seeking out lives offering exceptional prospects of longevity.

It was observed that in Cumberland, Westmorland and the Lowlands of Scotland, the conditions of life among the hardy and abstemious inhabitants all tended towards health and consequently towards longevity. It was the practice of the agents to visit the churchyards in these districts, and to note the family names engraved on the tombs of the persons who had died at the most advanced ages. They would inquire if there were still in existence members of those families whose record presented the greatest longevity, and then, after hunting out the healthiest subject living, they would proceed to buy an annuity on his life. The individual selected would receive a payment, and subsequent half-yearly fees for providing proofs of his existence and identification. Through this process of selection and by running these lives against the Government Tables, it will be seen what an advantage was gained by the insurance companies; and there is no doubt that a heavy loss was sustained by the Government over a large number of years.

Another favourite class for the operations of these agents was that of the Quakers, who, owing to their regularity of life and their well-known habits of sobriety, could be counted among the best lives of the community. Not only did the Government lose considerably in a legitimate way in these cases, but as it turned out, large losses were incurred owing to causes which, if not absolutely fraudulent, indicated inexplicable blindness on the part of the insurance companies or their agents. These frauds or acts of carelessness, were discovered in a singular manner.

A certain annuitant, Gabriel Webb, upon whose

life the insurance companies had largely invested, used to present himself half-yearly at the National Debt Office, to prove his existence. He had no interest in the matter beyond the fee of a guinea or so, which was allowed him for this purpose. The clerks, to whom he was well-known as a garrulous old boy, seem to have had some doubts as to his real age, so at last a little trap was arranged when he presented himself to the clerk in charge at the counter. Drawn into conversation by a remark regarding his wonderful health, "considering his great age of ninety-five," Mr. Webb agreed that he was strong and hearty, but added that he was only eighty-two. "No," said the clerk, "you are quite wrong; you are ninety-five, and I can prove it." "How can you prove it?" demanded the old man, "I ought to know best and I declare I am only eighty-two."

In reply the clerk produced from a pigeon-hole the certificate of birth which was given to the office when the first annuity was bought. On reading the document carefully over, old Webb seemed completely puzzled. "Yes, that's my name, sure enough," he said, "that's my father and mother, and that's the place where I was baptised," but after deep reflection he suddenly exclaimed, "I have it, this certificate is that of my elder brother, who died thirteen years before I was born and after whom I was named." It was quite true. The certificate of birth of the elder brother had been put in when the annuity was bought on the younger brother, and the clerks told me that the old gentleman was very indignant at the fraud to which he had been made a party.

Suspicion having been aroused and justified, we

made an investigation into a large number of selected "lives." It gave a great deal of trouble, as we had to send down and make local inquiries in many places; but the upshot was that we discovered a considerable number of cases similar to that of Gabriel Webb.

It became my duty to obtain satisfaction from the insurance companies for the loss sustained by the Government, and upon their refusal to afford redress, I brought the matter before the Courts. The first decision was entirely in favour of the National Debt Office, and was confirmed, on appeal, with some very strong comments, unfavourable to the companies, from the Lords Justices. The award was to this effect. The contracts were simply to be annulled, the companies being credited with their original purchase money, and debited with the amounts of the annuities which they had received. They made a final appeal to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Stafford Northcote, who, perhaps, rather weakly, waived the payment of interest on the amount due. On balance, however, the National Debt Office received a sum of between £60,000 and £70,000, which the companies paid with considerable reluctance.

A strong protest was made by my friend Sir John Lubbock, who was Chairman of the Phœnix Insurance Company, upon which fell the largest share of the loss. He called upon me and said angrily, that such a transaction would not be tolerated among business men in the city. I merely replied that I had done my duty as a public servant; and a few days afterwards, happening to meet at

dinner Mr. Kirkman Hodgson (who, if I remember rightly, was deputy-chairman of the company), I had the satisfaction of hearing from him that I could not have acted otherwise.

Two attempts were made during my period of office, towards reducing interest on the Public Debt. One, by Mr. Childers, was a failure; but the other, by Mr. Goschen, met with a considerable amount of success. The interest on the old 3 per cent. Consols was reduced, in the first instance, in 1888, to $2\frac{3}{4}$, and subsequently to its present rate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The Chancellor of the Exchequer thus attained his object, which was to give relief to the taxpayer, and from the strictly official point of view, no doubt he was right; but doubts have been entertained, whether the lowering of the rate of interest has not been dearly bought, in the loss of popularity of the old standard 3 per cent.

The high price of Consols is always considered the barometer of the credit of the country, but Mr. Gladstone was fond of saying, half in jest, that he liked to see the price of Consols low, meaning thereby that the lower the price the more profitable the application of the Sinking Fund. It is evident that with Consols at 114, as was the case in 1898, to buy them for the Sinking Fund, or investment for savings banks, was a most unprofitable transaction.

CHAPTER VIII

FERDINAND DE LESSEPS

Suez Canal shares—The Canal—Goschen—Le Grand Français—British shipowners' grievances—Arabi Pasha's revolt—L'affaire Panama—Charles de Lesseps—M. Waddington.

The history of Mr. Disraeli's purchase of the Suez Canal Shares from the Khedive Ismaïl Pasha in the autumn of 1875 has been frequently written. The Suez Canal Company consisted of 400,000 shares; the English Government became the holder of 176,602, for which the price paid was £3,976,000. By arrangement with M. de Lesseps it was agreed that on consideration of the large interest acquired by England in the undertaking, she should be entitled to have three representatives on the Board of the company. I was appointed one of the three, together with Colonel Sir John Stokes, and Mr. E. T. Standen, who had been associated with Colonel Stokes on the Danube Commission. The monthly meetings of the Board were held in Paris, necessitating my presence there for two or three days, but this did not interfere with my regular duties at the National Debt Office.

When I first joined the Suez Canal Company, Ferdinand de Lesseps, though no longer young, was full of vigour and energy, and at the height of his prosperity. His two sons by his first wife, Charles

and Victor, were both active assistants in his great company—of Charles I shall have to speak later. In 1869, the year of the opening of the canal, M. de Lesseps had married *en seconde noces* a very beautiful young lady from Mauritius by whom he had a large family.

When I was in Egypt in 1878 I visited the canal with M. de Lesseps. We made a careful examination of the whole length from Port Said to Suez; even in those days it was a wonderful work, and since then enormous improvements have been effected. The depth has been increased to 29 feet so that the largest vessels can use it, and during 1913, 5085 vessels passed through it, of which 2951 were British, with a tonnage of 12,052,484. The German tonnage, which at the opening of the canal was of very small account, in 1913 had increased to 3,352,287. The rate charged, originally 10 francs per ton, has gradually been reduced to its present rate of 6·25, with the intention of an eventual reduction to 5 francs per ton.

As an illustration of the remarkable character of the work, I remember M. de Lesseps observing, as we were crossing the Bitter Lakes in our steam launch, that a few days before the water was let in, he and a party of friends had galloped over the ground now lying beneath the lakes, which was then a wide expanse covered in parts with tamarisk and other scrub.

It had been anticipated that Ismaïlia would become a sort of watering-place, which might attract tourists and others. The Khedive had a palace there, M. de Lesseps had built himself a charming residence,

and a fine hotel had also been established; but unfortunately it was soon discovered that the site was unhealthy. A species of dengue fever attacked the residents, which was attributable to the mingling of the fresh water from the Sweet Water Canal with the salt water of the larger canal. Although I believe that scientific efforts have completely removed the trouble, the place has never come into favour in spite of the sanitary conditions being now quite normal. Shortly after the purchase of the Suez Canal Shares by the English Government, M. de Lesseps came to London, and received considerable attention from members of the Government. Sir Stafford Northcote, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, asked a number of people to meet him at breakfast, among the rest being Mr. Goschen, who asked me to introduce him to the distinguished Frenchman. I said, "Permettez moi de vous présenter M. Goschen." The name at once struck Lesseps as recalling to him the Ouady estate adjacent to the Fresh Water Canal, which after having been possessed and cultivated by the Suez Canal Company, had recently been retroceded to the Egyptian Government under the award of the Emperor of the French, and which was the site of the old Land of Goshen mentioned in the Bible. "Ah," he exclaimed in his abrupt hearty way, "oui, oui, je connais ça, la terre de Goshen!" Goschen's dislike to any allusion to his supposed Hebraic origin was well known, and his face on this occasion was a study.

In the earlier days of my connection with him M. de Lesseps was probably the most popular man in France. Gambetta had christened him "Le Grand

Français," and the whole nation was proud of him. His loans were eagerly subscribed, and the small French investor had the utmost confidence in him. He was fond of telling a story of a would-be contributor to one of his issues. The individual in question wrote saying that he wanted some shares in the company of the "Chemin de fer de l'isle de Suède." He was told that M. de Lesseps' company had nothing to do with a railway, an island, or Sweden, but he replied, "Çà ne fait rien, on m'a dit que c'était quelque chose pour embêter les Anglais," and he sent his contribution all the same!

After my two English colleagues and I had been associated with the company for some years, an agitation arose among the British shipowners, by far the most numerous users of the canal, against the oppressive rate charged on vessels passing through it. Lesseps and his Board, acting upon their rights under their original concession and their understanding with the English Government at the time of the purchase of our shares, refused for a long time to discuss the question of any concessions, which, they apprehended, might lead to a reduction of the profits of the company. The shipowners at length became clamorous and appealed to the Government for assistance, and on Lesseps still remaining obdurate, a serious campaign was commenced with a view to the creation of a second and competitive canal. This menace had its effect, and although Lesseps and his friends asserted that their concession was in the nature of a monopoly, and that no rival scheme could possibly be allowed, they at last saw the necessity of coming to an agreement with the shipowners. After much

negotiation a convention was signed between the Canal Company and representatives of the British shipping interest. There was some difficulty in bringing the contending parties face to face, and in obtaining the presence of M. de Lesseps in England for that purpose. Charles Lesseps, somewhat distrusting the English and their Machiavellian dealings, was hostile to any such step on the part of his father; but one evening, when the matter was being discussed in Paris between the two Lesseps and the three English directors, I had a sudden idea. I said to M. de Lesseps, "You remember, don't you, that you are a Freeman of the City of London?" "Yes, indeed," he replied, "I have the document making me one in a gold box." "Now," I went on, "in a few days, on the 9th November, the annual banquet will be held in the Guildhall, presided over by the Lord Mayor. Members of the cabinet and many other distinguished persons will be present, and speeches of importance are generally delivered on this occasion. What an excellent effect it would have if you appeared, and made some conciliatory remarks to the assembly." He was delighted at the proposal and at once exclaimed "Je le ferai!" and although Charles was a good deal put out, and not very well pleased with me for making the suggestion, he acquiesced, as he always did, in his father's resolution, which was in fact carried into effect. I arranged for M. de Lesseps' presence, and accompanied him to the Guildhall on the 9th November. Wearing the broad ribbon of the G.C.S.I. he addressed the gathering in a speech which was very well received. A few days afterwards a conference was held, and eventually

FERDINAND DE LESSEPS WITH HIS FAMILY, 1884.

a convention was signed between the Canal Company and the English shipping representatives which, although not giving full satisfaction to either party, removed all friction and has been ever since loyally adhered to by both. The main features of the treaty were that seven representatives of the British shipping industry should sit upon the Board in addition to the three Government representatives, and that arrangements should be made for the gradual reduction of the rates, until they should be lowered to 5 francs a ton. The present amount, as I have already stated, is 6·25 francs, as from the 1st January, 1913.

Upon the occasion of the trouble raised by Arabi Pasha in 1882, which necessitated European intervention, the English Government, before taking active steps to restore order, invited the co-operation of the French Government. M. de Freycinet was at that time Prime Minister, having recently succeeded Gambetta, whose "Grand Ministère" had lasted but a very short time. I had the pleasure of knowing M. de Freycinet. He was a man of great ability and one of the best war ministers the French have ever had. Whatever his inclinations may have been, he hesitated at the idea of detaching any considerable amount of troops from France while the fear and doubt as to the German menace still overshadowed French diplomacy. He consulted M. de Lesseps as a man thoroughly acquainted with the country and people of Egypt. Lesseps' sole preoccupation was the safety of his canal, and the interests of his shareholders, to which he thought warlike operations might be detrimental. He impressed M. de Freycinet with the great

difficulties of the enterprise, assuring him that fifty or sixty thousand troops would be required, and that even then they would have to undertake a prolonged campaign of six months and probably more. An opinion coming from such a weighty authority could not fail to have great influence, and, as a matter of fact, the French fleet sailed out of Alexandria harbour before the bombardment of the forts by the British, and the military expedition for the suppression of Arabi was undertaken by the British alone.

I remember a heated discussion in Lesseps' room at the Suez Canal Office, at one of our monthly meetings which must have taken place at the beginning of September, 1882. Several persons were present, including my colleague Sir John Stokes, and M. Blowitz, the *Times* correspondent. Lesseps, with considerable excitement, stated his view as he had already expressed it to M. de Freycinet, adding "Vous ne connaissez pas les Egyptiens; ce sont les meilleurs terrassiers du monde," meaning that they were very skilful at throwing up entrenchments to resist the advance of an armed force. The same day I happened to see Gambetta; his policy had been that of intimate relations with the English Government, and it was he who was the author of the Dual Note. I found him in despair at the refusal of the French Government to co-operate. "Armed opposition," he said, "what nonsense; you will have no real enemies to encounter." And then he checked himself and added, "Oh yes, you will meet with two serious antagonists—the flies and the mosquitoes!" Poor Gambetta, he had never been in Egypt, but his good sense and general knowledge proved more

correct than that of the governing statesmen and their advisers. He was justified in his prophecy as Sir Garnet Wolseley's expedition proved to be a mere walk over. After these events had taken place I could not help saying rather maliciously to Lesseps at our next Suez Canal meeting in October: "You see, my dear President, we haven't needed fifty thousand men or six months to arrive in Cairo!" He did not like this reminder as he was a good deal ruffled at what had taken place in Egypt, where his officials had been treated somewhat despotically by Admiral Hoskyns, and Sir Garnet Wolseley had acted in a high-handed way, having taken forcible possession of his canal and stopped all traffic for some days!

When the Panama Canal Company was in process of formation M. de Lesseps was good enough to offer me a seat on the Board; as a public official I had, of course, to decline the offer, and in view of future events it was lucky that I did so. I shall not relate the history of the Panama Canal, but I was the witness of many occurrences connected with its deplorable story. I am not sure how far the project was actually initiated by Lesseps himself, but there is no doubt that he was urgently pressed by the promoters of the proposed company to place himself at its head. They represented to him that his name would ensure the same success at Panama as at Suez, and that his reputation and high credit would easily enable them to raise the necessary funds. Lesseps allowed himself to be persuaded without much difficulty, but Charles, who had for some time been the chief worker and leading spirit on the Suez Canal Company, foresaw with clearer vision the difficulties of the

enterprise. Jealous of his father's fame he entreated him not to expose himself to the hazards of a possible failure. "Surely, my father," he said, "you have achieved glory enough for one lifetime." Lesseps, however, confident in his star, resisted the appeal of his son and accepted the position and responsibility as head of the new company. Charles, in his loyalty and affection for his father, never uttered another remonstrance, but threw himself with all his energy into the undertaking, bringing to bear upon it the administrative experience he had gained in connection with the Suez Canal.

The French investor again placed his savings at the disposal of "le Grand Français." Loan after loan was raised, and an immense expenditure incurred in the acquisition of plant and in preliminary works; but progress was slow, there came a time when funds began to slacken, and when doubts began to be entertained in financial circles. When all the money had been exhausted, and it was stated that the locks had yet to be constructed—"Who dares pronounce the word 'locks'?" exclaimed the old man. "God Almighty made the Straits of Magellan without locks, and I shall make my canal without locks!"

In France, when other means fail, money can generally be raised by a lottery loan, a very popular form of investment on account of the gambling element attached to it, but the issue of such a loan requires special legislation. Application was accordingly made to the Chamber, but it was soon found that in order to secure a majority a certain number of the deputies would have to be "squared." The

result was the famous "Affaire Panama" which led to so many humiliating disclosures and besmirched so many reputations. In the litigation which ensued, and the prosecution of the company for corrupt practices, Charles Lesseps was a prominent figure, and played a noble and pathetic part. His one object was to shield his aged father. His case was very simple—he had to consider the large number of shareholders, many of them being of small means, whose interests were entrusted to him; he believed that the proposed loan would enable the undertaking to be carried through, but he could not obtain it except by yielding to the demands of the deputies. His defence was admirably summed up in his answer to the judge, who inquired of him why he had done these things? He said, "When I am stopped at the edge of a wood by a robber who demands my purse or my life, I hand him over my purse." In his quality of scapegoat he had to undergo a period of imprisonment, during which I sometimes visited him, and witnessed the serene and philosophic composure with which he underwent his trials.

Time has vindicated Charles Lesseps; he remains an honoured member of the Suez Canal Board, respected by the many friends who know his story. M. Guichard, a senator, and an old member of the Board, succeeded Ferdinand de Lesseps as President. I have always thought that it would have been generous on the part of the shareholders if, at some subsequent vacancy, they had elected Charles Lesseps, to whom they owed so much, to the Presidency of the company.

But shareholders are not always a generous body,

and international politics do not always remain the same. When M. Waddington retired from his Embassy in England, the Suez Canal Board selected him as a director. His election had in due course to be ratified at the Annual General Meeting of the shareholders. Relations between France and England were not very friendly at that moment, and when M. Waddington's name was announced, there was considerable dissent expressed, and loud cries of "Vendu aux Anglais" were heard. M. Waddington, who was sitting next to me, turned to me, saying, "I should never have allowed myself to be nominated if I had thought I should have such a reception as this!" The affront was a cruel injustice, for France was never served by an ambassador more loyal to her interests, or more tenacious of her rights than M. Waddington, who, indeed, was perhaps extra punctilious on account of his English origin. This most unfair prejudice found further expression when he subsequently presented himself as a candidate for re-election to the Senate, and was the cause of his defeat. The blow which he received affected him deeply, and he did not long survive it.

CHAPTER IX

MISSION TO EGYPT

1876

Egyptian debt—Mr. Cave—Interest of the English Government—French schemes—Ismaïl Pasha—Financial intrigues—Prince of Wales' visit—Caisse de la Dette—Cave's report—French proposal adopted.

In 1875 the finances of Egypt were in a most disastrous condition. Loan after loan had been raised by the Khedive, Ismaïl Pasha, for which all the available resources of the country had been pledged. At length, in the extremity of his difficulties, and sorely pressed by the English and French bondholders, who between them held nearly the whole of the Egyptian debt, Ismaïl appealed to H.M.'s Government to recommend two English officials to undertake the direction of the receipts and expenditure of the Egyptian Treasury. The Government expressed their willingness to assist the Viceroy, but proposed in the first instance to send out some one of high position to confer with H.H., and to report generally on the financial situation. The Right Honble. Stephen Cave, M.P., H.M.'s Paymaster-General, was selected for this mission, and proceeded to Cairo, accompanied by Colonel Stokes, my Suez Canal colleague.

The total Egyptian debt, funded and floating, then amounted, nominally, to about £91,000,000. The

first Egyptian loan, which had been raised by Saïd Pasha in 1862, amounted to £3,292,000. In January, 1863, Ismaïl Pasha succeeded his uncle, and during the short period of thirteen years, added about £87,000,000 to the indebtedness of his country. No loan had cost less than 12 per cent., some had cost more than 13 per cent.; the railway loan of 1866 was raised at a cost of 27 per cent.; a great portion of the floating debt, which amounted to about £18,000,000, was renewed from time to time, and fresh loans were raised on exorbitant terms to meet these additional obligations.

Mr. Cave on his return presented a very useful report, and although many of the figures in it may not have been altogether accurate, owing to the *ex parte* information supplied by the Viceroy, it contained for the first time a tolerably complete *exposé* of the finances and administration of the country; and it had, further, the immediate effect of inducing the Viceroy to accept the principle of a system of European control, as a means of restoring his credit, and relieving himself from the pressure of his constantly increasing liabilities.

Early in 1876, while Mr. Cave was still in Egypt, the Khedive requested that some English official should be sent out to re-organise his financial administration, and the Government invited me to proceed to Cairo, and there to consider if it would be possible for me to accept office under H.H. The conditions under which I went are explained in the following letters, exchanged between the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Stafford Northcote, and myself, on February 10th, 1876.

10th February, 1876.

Dear Sir Stafford Northcote,

I have carefully considered what passed at the two interviews that I had with you yesterday. . . . The subject is of such importance to me that I am sure you will understand my anxiety not to act over-hastily, and I should have been glad of a little more breathing time had you not been under the necessity of telegraphing to Egypt last night. Upon quietly thinking the matter over, however, I find only one qualification that I should like to introduce into the arrangement. . . . I am very sensible of the many advantages attaching to the honourable office I hold under you, and the relinquishment of that position with all the ties and interests arising from it would be, I cannot conceal from myself, very painful to me. I candidly own I do not feel sufficiently confident that these considerations may not after a certain trial be so overwhelming as to make my new position, however otherwise attractive, repulsive and intolerable. With this feeling in my mind, I contemplated with pleasure a temporary, but not a permanent, absence from England. If to the conditions which you kindly proposed yesterday the further condition might attach that in the event of my finding at the end of the prescribed interval, irrespective of the question of health or difficulty of working the appointment, that the situation is upon personal grounds, utterly distasteful to me, I might return to my old office, then there would remain nothing for me to desire, and I should go to my new duties with a light heart. I hope I need not add that I should never claim the advantage of such a condition under any impulse of caprice, or that I have any foregone conclusion in asking it, or other motive than that which I have stated.

Believe me,

Yours very truly,

C. Rivers Wilson.

"*February 10th*, 1876.

"DEAR RIVERS WILSON,

"As I mentioned to you yesterday in conversation, the Government are anxious to respond to the request, which they have received from the Khedive, for assistance in regulating his financial administration, by sending you out to Egypt to confer with His Highness, and to take office under him if the terms proposed to you should be such as you can accept with satisfaction to yourself. It will, of course, be necessary, if you accept any appointment in Egypt, that you should resign your office of Controller-General of the National Debt in this country. Your doing so would be a serious loss to the Public Service in general, and I may add, to myself in particular; but you will see how false your own position would be, and how inconvenient might be the consequences to the Government, if you were supposed to be alone and the same time the servant of two masters, and if we on our side were supposed to be in any way responsible for your proceedings in Egypt. It is, however, possible that you may find after a short trial that the position which may be offered you is an unsuitable one, or you may be desirous, from reasons of health or on other grounds, to resign your appointment. It would not be fair that you should, in such a case, be left stranded; and it would certainly be a matter of regret that England should lose your services and Egypt should not gain them. I have therefore to say to you, on the part of the Government, that, in the event of your resigning the Controller-Generalship and taking service under the Khedive, we will abstain from filling up the appointment for six months from the time of your resignation of it; and further, that, should you within that time desire to return to England, you shall be reappointed to your present post.

"I will only add that as, in speaking of a period of six months, we are entering into engagements which it may not lie with us to fulfil, I propose to place a copy of this letter

on record, or in the hands of the Permanent Secretary to the Treasury, and to leave a strong recommendation to our successors to take up our pledge.

"I remain,

"Yours very faithfully,

"STAFFORD H. NORTHCOTE."

"Your letter of the 10th inst. has reached me since I wrote the foregoing. I think we are quite in accord on the subject. I don't think there will be any difficulty about the question of pension."

These letters indicate sufficiently the interest which the English Government were taking in the affairs of Egypt, following as a natural consequence upon their recent acquisition of so large a portion of the securities of the Suez Canal Company. While this interest was of a distinctly political character, that of the French Government was prompted in a greater degree by the pressure from the bondholders, and other French creditors of the Khedive. In passing through Paris, where I met Mr. Cave and had the opportunity of seeing his draft report and hearing what he had done in Egypt, I found that my mission was the subject of a good deal of speculation in financial circles, and also on the part of the Duc Decazes, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who was actively engaged in supporting certain schemes for the adjustment of Egyptian finance by a group of French bankers, who contemplated a settlement of the debt, combined with the establishment of a national bank under French auspices.

Although the Viceroy had expressed himself to the English representative at Cairo, and to others,

as anxious to give effect to Mr. Cave's recommendations, he coquetted with the Frenchmen, in spite of being well aware that he would have to pay dearly should circumstances compel him to accept their conditions. It was natural, therefore, that he should look forward with some anxiety to my appearance on the scene, in the hope that I should be the means of bringing about some arrangement less onerous than that which he might have to submit to if he surrendered to the Frenchmen. Accordingly, during my stay in Egypt, I found Cairo the theatre of a somewhat determined conflict between English and French pretensions. The difficulty of the position in which I found myself was that, while I was receiving kind advice and every encouragement from the Chancellor of the Exchequer (representing, naturally, H.M.'s Government) such support was of a more platonic nature than that which the Duc Decazes seemed willing to accord to the group of French financiers, represented by M. Pastré, the President of the Anglo-Egyptian Bank, who gave his name to the scheme which was being pressed upon the Khedive.

I may say that the latter himself told me that the French gentlemen who were negotiating with him declared the interest of their Government in the matter to be prompted by a desire to play a return match for the business of the Suez Canal Shares, which had been "snapped from them by England."

The Viceroy had considerable aptitude for finance and took a real pleasure in concocting financial combinations; indeed, he is reported to have said "If I were not Khedive of Egypt I should like to have been an 'agent de change.'" So far the bankers and

other business people with whom he had had relations had not been of a very high class. Before leaving London I had been in communication with Baron Lionel Rothschild, whose firm had up till now stood aloof from all connection with Egyptian finance. The Baron, who showed me then and for many years afterwards much kindness and confidence, was interested in my proceedings in Cairo without entering into any engagements, and I kept him informed of what was going forward. One morning I received a long cypher despatch from him, and, having occasion to see the Khedive, I dropped, as it were casually, the remark, "I have heard from Baron Rothschild to-day." At the mention of this great financial potentate, Ismaïl jumped to his feet as if he had received a galvanic shock. "Venez, mon cher, venez," he exclaimed, and preceding me through a series of rooms to an inner one where we could not be interrupted, he plied me with questions in the hope that the firm of Rothschild might be considering the idea of entering into relations with him.

Ismaïl was in the habit of interviewing bankers and others who were pressing offers of pecuniary assistance, and loved to play off one group against another. He told me an amusing story respecting his secretary, Barrot Pasha, the son of Ferdinand Barrot, and nephew of Odillon Barrot, the French Minister. His position naturally gave Barrot considerable influence, which he used as far as possible to serve the interests of his compatriots, acting as intermediary between the Paris financiers and his master. The room where the Viceroy gave interviews had a silk curtain drawn across the end which did not quite

reach the ground. Upon one occasion when he was discussing some negotiations he observed below it the extremities of a pair of well-known nankeen trousers which clothed the legs of his secretary, the wearer of them being evidently stationed there to listen to what was being said at the other side of the curtain. H.H., well pleased at the idea of a joke at the expense of Barrot, brought the meeting to a conclusion by saying, "Well, gentlemen, we may consider this matter more or less settled." Instantly the nankeen trousers disappeared like a flash of lightning, and no doubt carried their wearer to the telegraph office to send the news to Paris, where it would have a favourable effect upon Egyptian securities. Unfortunately the Khedive saw the negotiators again on the following day and contrived to get out of his half-concluded engagement!

Towards the end of March the Prince of Wales (King Edward VII.) arrived in Cairo for a few days' visit on his return from India. During his stay the Viceroy gave a dinner at the Palace to which he invited me, and I was introduced afterwards to H.R.H. The Prince had a talk with me about the situation, and invited me to dine with him the next night. He was very friendly, and told me that the Khedive had told him that he liked me very much. One night there was a gala performance at the Opera, of Verdi's *Aïda*, which had first been given in honour of the Empress Eugénie, after the opening of the Suez Canal. The production was on the most lavish scale, the scenery was magnificent, and the characters were hung with jewels which had been stripped from the mummies. During the performance the Viceroy sent

for me to his box and kept me engaged in a long conversation on business, until we were interrupted by the Prince of Wales, who kindly came to my rescue. "Now you must spare Wilson for to-night," he said, "for I am sure that he wants to enjoy this beautiful music," and he took me back with him to the box of the British Consul-General.

At that period I was in daily communication with the Khedive, who, entertaining the hope that I might be instrumental in delivering him from the thraldom of his French oppressors, treated me with marked confidence. He told one of my friends that I had "beaucoup d'intelligence," but was placed in a difficult position through not receiving support from home. But as time went on, his pecuniary difficulties bore more and more heavily on him, and no help came from London. Had I the authority to make any substantial offer on the part of my friends the Rothschilds I could easily have carried through a settlement upon satisfactory terms; but the Rothschilds, not unnaturally, declined to commit themselves in view of the hesitating policy of the English Government; and, moreover, their Paris house seemed unwilling to act in opposition to the Pastré group, on account of the support which it was receiving from the French Minister of Foreign Affairs.

On the 2nd May the Viceroy issued a decree establishing a special Treasury (Caisse) charged with regular service for the public debt, under the management of Foreign Commissioners, who, at H.H.'s request, were to be indicated by their respective Governments. Immediately afterwards the French, Austrian, and Italian Governments accepted

this power of nomination, and M. de Blignières, Herr Von Kremer, and Signor Baravelli were appointed by decree "Commissaires Directeurs près la Caisse de la Dette Publique." The English Government refused in the first place to name a Commissioner, but the following year Captain Evelyn Baring (Lord Cromer) was added to the Board on the recommendation of Mr. Goschen. It is right to say that this commission subsequently developed into a most important institution which has rendered the greatest services to Egypt, and has done much to establish and maintain the credit of the country.

Mr. Cave's report had now been published, and the Khedive's bitterness against England, especially on account of "cette malheureuse affaire de Cave," was very high. His complaint was that Cave had made an *exposé* of all his most confidential affairs without any corresponding advantage to himself. He told me that he intended writing a letter to Mr. Cave, for publication, commenting on some supposed inaccuracies in his report, and pointing out the impossibility of the situation which would be created for him if Mr. Cave's scheme were adopted. He would be left with a deficit, or at most with a trifling surplus, quite inadequate for the possible necessities of the country, which on account of its exposure to chances of famine—floods—and abundant harvests in other countries and consequent low prices for sale of produce in Egypt, can never calculate on a fixed income, and must have a large margin. All of this, he said, had been explained to Mr. Cave. The Viceroy's objections were very true; they recall the comment on Egypt made by Napoleon when he was

at St. Helena: "Sous une bonne administration le Nil gagne sur le désert—sous une mauvaise le désert gagne sur le Nil; en Egypte le Nil où le génie du Bien—le désert où le génie du Mal sont toujours en présence." It must be borne in mind that the view taken by the Viceroy, which was in fact a correct one, in complaining of the publicity given by Mr. Cave's report to his private affairs, was that his tenure in Egypt was that of an absolute proprietor of the country, subject only to the Suzerainty of the Sultan. A year or two later I had occasion to visit the magnificent Palace, surrounded by a park and gardens of 600 acres, which he had recently created at Ghizeh at a cost of several million sterling. At that time he was playing the part of a constitutional sovereign with a published budget and accounts, including provision for his personal Civil List of some £300,000 or £400,000 a year. When I saw H.H. the following day, after expressing my admiration at the beauties of his new property, I could not resist the temptation of saying: "I must congratulate your Highness upon the extreme intelligence with which your Civil List is administered, enabling you to incur the cost of so splendid a residence." The Khedive did not answer, but gave me a very black look. I heard afterwards that he related what had passed to his entourage with much indignation, saying: "Is not Mr. Wilson aware that when I have paid my tribute to Constantinople all the rest is mine to deal with as I think proper." This statement would have been perfectly true had he not been so foolish as to incur enormous liabilities to foreign creditors; thus courting foreign interference and deliberately abdicating his independence.

Early in May Ismaïl caused two decrees to be prepared, one embodying the recommendations of Mr. Cave's report, the other adopting the French scheme. I remonstrated with H.H. and pointed out grave objections to the latter proposal, and up to the last moment he clung to the hope that with English help the former might be issued, but my hands were tied, all I could offer was advice, and that was not what H.H. wanted. Our Consul-General was then General Stanton (afterwards Sir Edward Stanton), a man of some ability, who had successfully negotiated the purchase of the Suez Canal Shares. He was *persona grata* with the Khedive, and being a very handsome man, and not unconscious of his personal gifts, he was somewhat too easily flattered by the attentions of H.H., who would exclaim, "Le Général Stanton est le premier gentilhomme de l'Egypte!" Unfortunately he failed me at this juncture, although he knew that I had at least the unofficial support and goodwill of H.M.'s Government. In spite of my urgent appeal to him he retired to Alexandria, leaving me to fight the battle alone.

On May 7th the Khedive signed the decree adopting the French proposals for the consolidation of the debt. After that my further stay in Egypt was unnecessary. H.H. made me certain offers for participating in the new organisation but not of a character at all acceptable, or such as he would certainly have proposed had the English interests prevailed, and had English financial assistance been rendered to him. He continued, however, to be extremely civil to me and he sent his photograph to my wife when I called on him to take leave.

Just before my departure I received the following letter from Mr. Lowe:—

"*May 12th*, 1876.

"My Dear Wilson,

"I was not at all surprised not to hear from you for I know how difficult your position is. Your story is just what I should have expected except that I did not know that France had gained so decided a victory and am even now rather puzzled to understand what are the outward and visible signs of her success. I should think the course taken, that of declaring a bankruptcy and making a compulsory settlement with creditors, was the best that could be taken, but I have not the least idea that the money will be forthcoming.

"The best news in your letter is that you have not given up your place here, which I thought you were only to hold for six weeks, and that we may soon hope to see you back again.

"I hope you will be well paid for your trouble and if so you will have been the only person who has gained by the affair. You have got a C.B., have been put prominently before the public and held a prominent position in the eyes of all Europe, so now nothing remains but to retire upon your laurels before a leaf of them has had time to fade.

"I have got into a row by an indiscreet allusion in a speech at Retford, but, like Don Rafael in "Gil Blas," I flatter myself je m'en suis tiré en homme d'esprit.

"Very truly yours,

"Robert Lowe."

CHAPTER X

THE MOUFFETISH

1876

His power—Resignation—Death—Capitan Pasha—Mehemet Ali—Mr. Larking's letter.

THE most remarkable personage in Egypt after the Khedive was the famous Mouffetish, Ismaïl Sadyk Pasha, the Finance Minister, who was foster-brother to Ismaïl Pasha, and had great influence with him. His authority throughout the country was paramount and while collecting revenues for the extravagant expenditure of his master he amassed for himself a very large fortune. He was an intelligent man though not highly educated, and at the very outset of European interference he appeared to have a fore-warning of the fate likely to occur to those who had contributed to bring the country into so disastrous a condition. When it became evident that I was unwilling to accept office in Egypt he showed great anxiety, as he had hoped to gain my support when the evil day arrived. One evening Chérif Pasha, the President of the Council, called upon me to take me to the Khedive. We drove out together to Ghezireh Palace, where Ismaïl detained me a long time, discussing, as was his wont, a variety of subjects —the object of the interview being, especially,

to ascertain definitely whether any arrangement could be made for my remaining in Egypt. At last, when it was very late, I took my leave and rejoined Chérif, who was waiting in the ante-room. I recall the scene so well. It was a lovely moonlight night in May, and as we emerged from the Palace there sprang out from some dark bushes a figure who clutched me by the arm and addressed me rapidly in Arabic, labouring apparently under great excitement. He wore gold-rimmed spectacles through which his eyes gleamed, and with his great hooked nose and crouching attitude he gave me the impression of some uncanny bird of prey. Startled by his appearance I shook him off, but immediately recognised the Mouffetish. Turning to Chérif I asked him to translate what he was saying, as my knowledge of Arabic was very slight. "He hopes," said Chérif, "that you have decided to remain here as his colleague. He knows that the Khedive had sent for you to try and persuade you to stay, and he has been waiting to hear the result of the interview." What might have happened had I remained it is impossible to say, but before six months had passed the unfortunate man had met his doom.

In the autumn of the same year (1876), when Messrs. Goschen and Joubert were making their inquiry into the financial condition of the country, detailed accounts were called for, both of revenue and expenditure. It was extremely difficult to get at the truth and every effort was made to throw dust in the eyes of the two Commissioners. The Mouffetish, being Finance Minister, was of course held responsible, although he was not really a free agent and always declared he

had never taken a single step without the knowledge and approval of the Viceroy. Finding himself in an impossible position between the urgent pressure put upon him and the fear of displeasing his master, he took the unprecedented step for an Oriental Minister of resigning his post. On the day following his resignation he attended at the Palace of Abdin, and the Khedive appeared to receive him with his usual friendliness, inviting him, as he frequently did, to come for a drive. They drove together to the Ghezireh Palace on the other side of the Nile, and the Khedive entered the interior apartments leaving the Mouffetish in an ante-room. There he was shortly joined by Hassan Pasha, the Viceroy's third son, who arrested him and conducted him to the steps which led down to the Nile, where he was placed on board a steamer which proceeded at once up the river. He was never seen alive again.

Many versions have been given of the time and manner of his death ; about which there has always been considerable mystery. The official story was that having been tried by a Council of the high dignitaries of the State, he was condemned to exile at Dongola ; that he drank brandy continuously on his journey up the river and died shortly after his arrival at Dongola, in November, 1876.

I took some pains to ascertain the real truth and was satisfied in my own mind that he never passed the bridge of Casr el Nil alive, but was immediately strangled on board the steamer, which nevertheless continued its journey up the Nile. The fiction was kept up that he was alive on board, but at the various stopping places no communication was allowed

with the shore. As soon as his arrest was known in Cairo the American Consul-General drove out to Ghezireh and protested to the Khedive what a bad effect it would have on European opinion should any injury happen to the fallen minister. Barrot assured me afterwards that Ismaïl sent a messenger at once to the steamer, but that he arrived too late, as the tragedy was already accomplished.

It should be borne in mind in extenuation in some degree of this action of the Khedive, how entirely dissimilar are the principles which regulate both the conception and administration of justice, as judged by Western and Oriental ideas. From time immemorial the Oriental ruler has been accepted as the unchallenged dispenser of justice upon his subjects, without reference to codes of law or anything but his own free will. Ismaïl, therefore, was not departing from traditional custom in exercising this prerogative against the Mouffetish, if we assume the culpability of that Minister. It is only fair to say, on the other hand, that both M. de Lesseps and Mr. Vivian, H.M.'s Consul-General, declared to me their conviction that the unfortunate man did arrive at Dongola and died there of excessive drinking. I hope for the credit of the Viceroy, that this is the true version of the story.

In illustration of the methods by which a despotic ruler could deal with an offender without the observance of any judicial forms, I have in mind a story from my friend Mr. Larking, of the fate that befel the Turkish Capitan Pasha, Achmed, who had betrayed the Sultan by handing over his fleet to Mehemet Ali. When in 1840 Mehemet Ali, under pressure from the Powers and under conditions

favourable to himself, made his submission to the Sultan, the latter insisted that the fleet should be restored to him, together with the treacherous chief admiral. Mr. Larking at that time inhabited Alexandria, where he had a beautiful garden along the canal. He was on very friendly terms with the Governor of Alexandria, who was in the habit of visiting him there to take his coffee and smoke his chibouque. One evening he observed that his friend the Governor appeared in bad spirits and unusually silent. He asked him what was the matter, and the Governor replied that he had just had to execute a very painful duty. Mehemet Ali had instructed him to convey to Achmed Pasha the following message, that "the Capitan Pasha was well aware of the grateful and friendly feeling he had towards him, but that he was under an absolute political necessity to comply with the demand of the Sultan, and that the Capitan Pasha would well understand the fate which awaited him if he returned to Constantinople. In these circumstances it might be more agreeable to him to anticipate such a consummation." The unfortunate man at once understood the situation, and bowing his head, exclaimed, "Allah is Great." The Governor then called for the traditional cup of coffee and Achmed Pasha retired into his harem and was seen no more.

The following anecdote, also related to me by Mr. Larking, is an instance of the very personal form of government exercised by Mehemet Ali. Mr. Larking was travelling with the Viceroy in his barge along the canals of the Delta, when they found at Tantah the canal embankments in a very bad state

of repair. Mehemet expressed his strong displeasure to the Moudir of the province who was responsible for the proper maintenance of these most important works, and gave him peremptory orders to carry out the necessary repairs; telling him that it would be the worse for him if he found that his instructions had not been obeyed the next time he passed that way. Whether the Moudir thought that the Viceroy would not return, or that he would forget all about the matter, the fact remains that he did nothing. But it so happened that Mehemet did return to Tantah in a few months, Mr. Larking being again in his company. Finding that his orders had not been carried out, he at once commanded the Moudir to be thrown on his face, and then and there to receive a severe infliction of the Kourbash—a case of elementary and substantial justice.

Mr. Larking, to whom I have referred several times, had lived a great deal in Egypt, and had a very intimate knowledge of the Khedive Ismaïl's character, and of Egyptian affairs in general. I insert the following letter which I received from him when I was in Cairo in 1876, as it foretells so truly what did in effect happen two years later.

"Paris, 6*th April*, 1876.

". . . My object in coming to Paris was as you may suppose to see Nubar. With him I have had frequent conversations about your position. We have discussed it in all its bearings. The conclusion we have come to is the solution of this question—

"Is the Khedive sincere, or is he not?

"Everything turns upon this. If he is sincere his course is clear and simple, but involves his renouncing all

interference in the Finance of the country, but Finance being the acknowledged mainspring of all Governmental machinery, this would, to a certain degree, be an abdication of the Autocratic principle which has for centuries been inherent in the Rulers of Egypt.

"Will he ever consent to this? Those who know him have their doubts.

"Possibly under existing difficulties he may, and I think it more than probable he will *profess* to do so. But verbal consent, unless accompanied by some act to prove his sincerity, will not suffice, and this act must be Radical, nothing short of as sweeping a reform in the administration of the Finance as that which has been established in the administration of Justice. He has European Judges, he must have a European Minister of Finance—not one merely in name, but one with power to enforce the necessary Reforms.

"It is the post *you* ought to hold, the only one in which you can be of use to the Khedive, in any other you will be a mere cipher, and this is not the position you could ever consent to hold.

"But you will very naturally say—Will the Khedive consent to such an appointment with the powers implied? For my own part I certainly entertain doubts. Nubar, however, thinks that with a certain amount of pressure from the English Government it might be accomplished, provided this pressure is accompanied with some real, some material offer of support, and not confined to a simple recommendation which by itself would be worse than useless.

"At this critical moment the very best advice unaided with means to carry it out will not relieve the difficulties of the Treasury, it must be accompanied with some scheme for raising money which can at once be brought into operation. Of some such scheme, I imagined that you were likely to have been the bearer, but we hear nothing of it. In the meantime the French group of Bankers supported by their Government are coming to the fore. The money

that is required by the Khedive is ready; all that is wanting is his consent to the conditions. This was expected yesterday, but up to a late hour last night it had not arrived.

"Mr. Disraeli's object in purchasing the Canal shares, and afterwards constituting the Cave Mission was, as is generally supposed, for the purpose of creating an English interest in Egypt to counterbalance that of France; he seems likely to fail in attaining that end, and that from sheer want of backbone. It looks as if he were frightened at the magnitude of his conception, and in the eleventh hour gives France the benefit of his timidity. Whilst Disraeli was advising the French were acting.

"Whilst writing this I am informed that the Khedive has asked for a further delay of forty-eight hours before giving his consent to the French propositions. There is also a rumour on the Bourse that you have been appointed Minister of Finance. I hope there is ground for this report which, to me, appears too good to be true. . . .

"Nubar cares little about re-entering the service, all he wishes is to live *quietly* on his property in Egypt, but so long as the Viceroy entertains such hostile feelings towards him this would be impossible. I tell him to bide his time and let the storm pass when all will be well again. . . ."

CHAPTER XI

FINANCIAL CHAOS IN EGYPT

1876–1878

Goschen and Joubert—The Dual Control—Demand for an inquiry—Formation of the Commission of Inquiry.

The English and French bondholders disapproved of the Khedive's scheme for settling the debts as embodied in the decree of the 7th May, 1876, and acting in concert sent out representatives to confer with H.H. with the view of obtaining a modification of the terms of the decree. The two agents selected were Mr. Goschen, a member of the late cabinet, and M. Joubert, a well-known French financier. The investigation conducted by these two capable and experienced men of business was of a much more searching and complete character than that of Mr. Cave, and resulted in a series of recommendations which were generally acceptable alike to the creditors and, apparently, to the Khedive, and were embodied in a decree of the Egyptian Government dated 18th November, 1876. This decree is a landmark in the history of Egyptian finance, and may be said to be the starting point for the reforms, and the scheme of organisation, which have subsequently been adopted. It confirmed and strengthened the position of the "Caisse de la Dette,"

and for the first time introduced what was afterwards known as the "Dual Control." Two Controllers-General were to be appointed—one to be the Controller-General of Receipts, the other of Accounts and Public Debt—and it was specifically provided that one of the Controllers-General was to be an Englishman and the other a Frenchman.

The hopes raised by the Goschen-Joubert settlement were, however, doomed to disappointment. Deficit after deficit was reported; creditors of all sorts clamorously pressed their claims upon the Treasury. Salaries of officials remained unpaid, and legal proceedings were instituted by the Commissioners of the Public Debt against the Finance Minister, the Khedive's son, Prince Hussein (who had succeeded the unfortunate Mouffetish), for interception and misappropriation of revenues which were specially assigned to the service of the debt.

Mr. Vivian (afterwards Lord Vivian), who had succeeded General Stanton as Consul-General in Egypt, kept H.M.'s Government fully informed of the ill-success which had attended the working of the new system after a year's experience, and of the financial chaos into which the country was drifting. He reported that in the opinion of the English and French officials a thorough and still more searching inquiry must now be held into the real state of affairs. It should be no half measure, but should go into the question of reducing expenditure as well as of increasing revenue. It should suggest means of acquiring stronger control in the provinces over the collection and payment of taxes, and of protecting the Fellaheen from arbitrary and oppressive

taxation. The expediency of changing the dates of the coupons so as to accord better with the harvest seasons should also be considered. The leading merchants of Alexandria also supported this suggestion for an inquiry, and eventually it was decided by the two governments that it was essential in order to save the country from complete bankruptcy.

After my return from Egypt in 1876 I was constantly consulted by the Treasury and the Foreign Office in reference to Egyptian matters, and especially during the progress of the negotiations which led eventually to the appointment of the Commission of Inquiry. The following letter, addressed by the Treasury to the Foreign Office and drafted by myself, sets out the lines upon which I considered the inquiry should be conducted.

COLONEL STANLEY TO LORD TENTERDEN.

(Received February 5th.)

(Extract.) Treasury Chambers, *February 4th*, 1878.

With reference to the despatch from Her Majesty's Agent and Consul-General in Egypt, dated December 22nd, 1877, inclosed in your letter of the 1st February, I am desired by the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury to offer the following observations for the consideration of the Secretary of State.

The appointment of the Commission of Inquiry, alluded to in Mr. Vivian's despatch, would seem to afford a legitimate and favourable opportunity for the exercise of any influence which Her Majesty's Government may think proper to bring to bear upon the Khedive for the advancement of those interests.

If the scope of the proposed inquiry be sufficiently enlarged, and if it be conducted with firmness and intelligence, most important benefits may result for all interests concerned; but, on the other hand, looking to the experience of the last two years, it is to be apprehended that, unless securities are taken for ensuring its efficient prosecution, it may only lead to further disappointment, and may, indeed, rather tend to perpetuate than remove existing defects of administration, besides being made an instrument for justifying any plan that may be in contemplation for reducing the interest of the debt.

The Viceroy has declared to Mr. Vivian, as stated in a former despatch, that the estimates of revenue given to Mr. Cave and to Mr. Goschen, which forms the basis of the recent financial settlement, were erroneous and exaggerated, and he throws the responsibility of their preparation on his late Finance Minister. Such a statement is most surprising in view of the intimate knowledge which His Highness appears to possess of all the details of his Government, the personal communications which both Mr. Cave and Mr. Goschen had with him on the subject of their respective missions, and the improbability that the Minister would have acted in opposition to the views of his master; but this circumstance proves at least how difficult it must be for Europeans to obtain trustworthy information as to the actual receipts and expenditure of the country, as well as the necessity for framing the inquiry upon a basis which may make the Commissioners as far as possible independent of the accounts and statements supplied by official and other native witnesses.

The attention of the Commissioners should, therefore, as it would seem, be directed not only to an examination into the actual revenue and expenditure, the results of which may be more or less accurate, but to the more vital question of the causes which have brought this naturally wealthy country into so deplorable a condition, and to the remedies for their removal. It is alleged, for instance,

that much of the present distress is traceable to the wholesale acquisition of lands by the Khedive on behalf of himself and his family, and the injudicious system upon which their management is conducted. One million acres of land, or about one-fifth of the whole of the arable lands of Egypt, are popularly supposed to have passed into the hands of the Khedive and his family since his accession. It has been represented that these lands, instead of being farmed out to the dispossessed proprietors at an adequate rent, are administered directly by the Khedive, that they are cultivated in a great measure by forced unpaid labour, that the Viceregal lands of Upper Egypt are illegally assessed at a lower rate for taxation than other not more productive lands in Lower Egypt; that, in short, this question of the land operations of the Khedive lies at the root of the financial difficulties of Egypt. It should be the duty of the Commissioners to examine those widely diffused statements and resolutely to expose the defects they may discover in the financial administration of the country, and suggest methods for the removal of such defects founded upon principles of honesty and sound economy.

Without anticipating the results of such an investigation, my Lords cannot but point out that should the Commissioners recommend the substitution for the wasteful system of personal management by the Khedive, of a system of leasing these vast tracts of lands, he himself would be the first to benefit, and in the largest measure, from so wholesome an improvement, because he would receive in rent a far larger income, with infinitely less trouble than he now derives from the sale of his produce.

This consideration, if pressed upon his notice, might well outweigh any objection he might at first entertain to an extension of the inquiry in this direction. On the other hand, the bondholders would be benefited, because the land, which is the source of all wealth in Egypt, would become more productive alike in taxes and in material produce, while the fellah, above all, would have cause for

satisfaction, because, with the disappearance of the system of personal farming by the Viceroy, would disappear, as a natural consequence, the system of *corvée*, except in its application to works of public utility.

The Commissioners would, no doubt, further consider whether the prosperity of the fellah, which is the best ultimate security for the bondholder, might not be still more firmly assured by the extension to the native population of an amended system of justice.

These questions are of primary importance. There would naturally be many other directions in which the Commissioners could advantageously make inquiry with more special reference to the development of revenue and curtailment of expenditure if proper latitude were given to them, but the principal point to be insisted upon would seem to be that the instructions to be given to the Commissioners should not be confined to ascertaining the actual resources of the country under present conditions, but that they should be large enough to allow of a thorough probing of the system which has brought the country to its present state. . . .

P.S.—My Lords have received a copy of a telegram from Mr. Vivian, stating that the Khedive has actually issued a Decree for the appointment of a Commission of Inquiry, and that it has been very unfavourably received in consequence of the limited scope proposed to be given to the inquiry.

This intelligence confirms my Lords as to the correctness of the views expressed in their letter, and seems to make the present moment especially opportune for pressing them on the attention of His Highness.

The Commission of Inquiry of 1878 marks an important epoch in the modern history of Egypt, but its story so far as I know has never been fully

related. The valuable work of Lord Milner commences at a later date, while the more compendious volumes of Lord Cromer deal with it in a somewhat perfunctory manner, and hardly attribute to it the influence which it undoubtedly had upon subsequent events. For this reason, and because I was perhaps more intimately concerned in it than any of the other actors, I have gone into its details somewhat exhaustively, giving an account of its proceedings written on the spot from day to day, which shows clearly the many difficulties with which the Commissioners had to cope. For the first time a really vigorous attempt was made, supported by the combined efforts of the European Governments chiefly concerned, to investigate the system under which such disastrous consequences had become possible, and to apply a remedy.

The establishment of the Commission was an affair of long and tiresome negotiation owing to the attitude of the Viceroy, who, while willing enough to encourage any proceeding which might extricate him from his troubles, hoped to insure that the inquiry should be conducted on lines prescribed by himself. His idea was to limit its scope to ascertaining the resources of the country without encroaching upon the question of how those resources had hitherto been applied; in a word it was *revenue* and not *expenditure* that was to be examined. He even went so far as to issue a decree for an investigation into the revenues only, but this did not meet the views of the Governments, and he was at last compelled to issue the decree of the 30th March, 1878, which appointed the Commissioners, and in

the words of which most extended powers were given to the Commission :—

"Les investigations de la Commission d'enquête porteront sur tous les elements de la situation finançière. . . . Les Ministres et fonctionnaires de notre gouvernement seront tenus de fournier directemment à la Commission sur sa demande, et dans le plus bref delai tous les renseignements qui leur seront demandés." . . .

but notwithstanding his official acceptance of these terms, it will be seen later on that the Commission had a continual struggle with the Khedive, who declined to admit the interpretation of the words of his own decree.

The principle of a Commission of Inquiry having been settled, a good deal of trouble arose as to its composition. It was finally decided that it should consist of the four existing members of the Commission of Public Debt, namely, Messrs. Baravelli, Baring, von Kremer, and de Blignières. Besides these there were to be two Vice-Presidents and a President; the former were Riaz Pasha, representing the Egyptian Government, and myself. There remained the nomination of the President. The Khedive suggested Gordon Pasha, knowing that he could count upon his friendship and loyalty to himself. Gordon, the most impractical of men, who allowed himself always to be led away by sentimental impulses, would, with all his great qualities, have been an unfortunate selection. He himself, luckily, was not keen to undertake the duty, and eventually by common assent, M. de Lesseps was chosen as

President. In accepting the office he at once stated that he would be unable, owing to the prior claims of his Suez Canal Company, to devote the whole of his time to the conduct of the Commission, and that after opening the proceedings he would be obliged to return to France, and to delegate his duty to one of the Vice-Presidents who, in the circumstances, would naturally be the English one, namely, myself.

CHAPTER XII

COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

1878

Interview with M. Waddington—The Commissioners—First discussion—Visit to the Suez Canal—Sir Richard Burton—Examination of witnesses—Khedive's extravagance.

THE course of the proceedings of the Commission of Inquiry may be gathered from the following extracts taken from letters which I wrote to my wife during my stay in Egypt:—

Paris, 4*th April*, 1878.

I really think as a result of all the discussions that have taken place so far, that my absence will be much shorter than I anticipated.

Nubar came to fetch me to dine with Adams.* We had an interesting party, including Blowitz, the *Times* correspondent. He is very clever, humorous and witty, and I daresay to-day's *Times* will have some notice about Egypt as he wrote one after dinner. Joubert had sent me a note on arriving to say that he had arranged an interview for me with M. Waddington at 2.30 to-day, but I sent him a line back submitting that Adams was going to take me to Waddington. I thought it better in

* Adams, Secretary to the British Embassy, afterwards Sir Francis Ottiwell Adams, K.C.B.

every way that I should go under the wing of my own Embassy, and I wished to accentuate that I am not going to Egypt as an agent of the bondholders. . . . I breakfasted with Nubar, Mr. Larking, and Dicey, at the Café de la Paix, and after breakfast came in Campbell Clark, the correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*. He was very *empressé* to me, and I daresay he will put something in his letter to-day. By the by, did you observe the article in the *World*, if not, get it. It is very civil to me, much more so than to the Viceroy, and in *Punch* there is an article in the political summary about "our Rivers." I know these things amuse you. After breakfast I went to the Embassy to fetch Adams who took me to the Foreign Office. My interview with Waddington was very agreeable; his object was to impress upon me the absolute necessity of France being with us in any action we may take in Egypt. I knew his views already though I don't altogether share them. However, it is useful to know exactly all the details of the situation. One advantage will come out of his anxiety on this head, viz., that he will oblige his people in Egypt to work with Baring and me, and not against us, as they were inclined to do. He told Adams that he ought to take me to the Elysée this evening, as Maréchal Macmahon (the President) had heard a good deal about me and would like to know me. . . .

Paris, *5th April*, 1878.

I have been so talked to that my head whirls. You said I had Egypt on the brain, I have certainly got it on the nerves. Primrose * (my secretary)

* Now Sir Henry Primrose.

arrived this morning. I think he will be an agreeable companion, and of assistance in the work.

I went with Adams to the Elysée last night where I was introduced to the Maréchal, several ministers, etc. The Maréchal made me a little speech, repeating what he had been told, namely, that he hoped I would do my best for the creditors, that the number of French creditors was quite as considerable as the number of English ones. I said that the best chance of success lay in the excellent relations which fortunately existed between the representatives of the two countries.

Shepheard's Hotel, Cairo, 13*th April*.

Here I am in my old quarters of two years ago. . . . I had a visit from Lesseps to talk over affairs, and afterwards went to see Baring; the result so far is that I see a very decided wish not to work the enquête through the hot summer months; at the same time I tell them that it is out of the question for me to go home and come out again, and the view I have expressed is this, that instead of entangling ourselves in the details of accounts where we shall be completely lost, we should take in hand certain broad defined features of the situation, some of the large questions which lie at the root of the whole evil, and which can be examined without any great waste of time, that we should make a preliminary report upon these general principles, and recommend reforms, and that Lesseps and I would then be free temporarily. The others can, if they like, take their holiday in Europe, and on their return go into the more detailed part of the question. . . .

Cairo, 14*th April*, '78.

Yesterday I went with M. de Lesseps to the first meeting of our Commission. We met at the Ministry of Commerce. Baring, I told you about; the other three I saw for the first time. M. de Blignières, the Frenchman, is intelligent and able at finance, and, they say, not a bad fellow; Kremer, the Austrian, quite sensible; Baravelli, the Italian, a good harmless sort of man, the two latter inclined to be influenced by Blignières. I want you to know what sort of men my colleagues are, as so much of the success of our undertaking depends on their individual qualities, and as you will understand the progress of affairs better if you know something about them. . . . We treated only preliminary questions . . ., but had a very animated discussion on one point—the choice of a secretary. It lay between a Frenchman now here in the Finance Ministry, and a man to be brought from the Finance Ministry in France. As it was represented that the first is quite capable, knows the country, and is actually on the spot, and as Lesseps was strongly opposed to bringing an unknown man out from France, I supported him on the ground that the question, though important, was not of first-rate importance; and because (seeing a disposition to go against the authority of Lesseps) I thought we, when we fairly could do so, ought to allow the President a certain preponderance of opinion. However, we were out-voted, the four Debt Commissioners going one way, and Lesseps, Riaz Pasha, and I, the other. I was very sorry at this, as it argued badly for our future relations, and if anything solid is to be done it is essential that

Baring and I should act together. I regretted his decision all the more because the point was not essential, he had not strong views about it, and it was our first vote. In the evening Desmichels, the French Consul-General, had a dinner for me, and I said a word to Vivian about the occurrence of the morning. He spoke, I presume, to Baring, who came and expressed his particular regret, fearing I was a little disheartened, etc. I think even he felt he had acted unwisely. The result was that the matter is not to be regretted, because it has established a sort of acknowledged necessity for our working together.

15*th April*, '78.

After Desmichels' dinner on Saturday I drove Barrot home, and took the opportunity of speaking to him very frankly about the Viceroy's position. I knew every word would be repeated, and spoke accordingly. My object was to put this indirect pressure on the Khedive to induce him to pay the important coupon due to the creditors on the 1st of May, which is the great question of the moment. If he does not pay, it is bankruptcy, but the money is not yet in the hands of the Commissioners of Debt, and no one believes it will come in. At the same time no one knows whether the Khedive is not wilfully keeping back the revenues. My object was to frighten him into paying them if he has them. I said nothing to any one about my conversation to Barrot, but just now, at our meeting, Lesseps was called out by Barrot, who told him that he had repeated all that I had said textually to H.H., who was greatly affected by it. It has given him "la

colique," and from what Barrot said he will make a great effort, so altogether the payment of the coupon is much more hopeful. I am a little afraid of appearing to interfere with Vivian, and shall do all I can to avoid doing so, but Lord Salisbury not only spoke to me with great openness and directness, but actually authorized me to speak as from himself in a certain sense to the Viceroy. . . .

17th April, '78.

Yesterday after my meeting with the Commission we went to Abdin to breakfast with the Viceroy. There were no strangers besides ourselves, only several pashas, Barrot, etc. The Khedive was fulsomely flattering to me, he coaxed and said pretty things, but I was not his dupe, and I do not think he had the best of it. . . . I went afterwards to the Ghezireh Gardens. Two magnificent Secretary birds had arrived the day before. The animals are shamefully neglected there, and these fine wild creatures had beaten their beautiful plumage off against the bars, and one had blood streaming from his beak which he had battered in his attempts to get out. It was quite a small cage, about large enough for one big owl. I gave the keeper a tremendous blowing-up, made him then and there take them out and put them into a large paddock where there was only a deer (who was frightened out of his senses by such strange intruders), and told the man that I should come again in a day or two, and that unless I found the birds quite well I should tell the Khedive and have him punished. . . .* To-morrow I go with

* The Khedive subsequently made me a present of the birds which I sent to the Zoological Gardens in London.

Lesseps to Ismaïlia to visit the Canal. The last days of this week being holidays, our Commission would not sit, and Lesseps talks of returning to France on the 30th. I would not leave Egypt without taking a careful look at the Canal in my character as a Director of the Company, and I am glad to go through it with Lesseps.

Cairo, 24*th April*, '78.

We had a pleasant Easter holiday on the Canal. We stayed at Port Said in a house belonging to the Suez Canal Co., airy and comfortable. Went over the works of the company, and had a grand dinner at the big hotel, with the Governor of Ismaïlia and all the local notabilities. We returned to Ismaïlia by the launch on Saturday, and had a pleasant evening at the Lesseps'. On Sunday we took the steam launch again and started for Suez, but as it was windy and rough on the Bitter Lakes we telegraphed for a boat, which met us and took us to the end of our journey. On the way we passed the *Serapis*, the Prince of Wales's ship on his Indian voyage, and H.M.S. *Shannon*. We got to Suez in the evening, and were received by the Governor and other big wigs. I was glad of this opportunity of examining the Canal so thoroughly, and it was interesting to do so in the company of Lesseps who created it. It is marvellous how he, almost single-handed, overcame all the difficulties in his way—political, financial, and engineering. It is given to few men to realise so completely such a wild dream as this one appeared to be, and to have the satisfaction of living for years to

witness its success, and to enjoy all the reputation derived from it.

I landed at several points of the Canal and made myself as well acquainted as I could with a good many things that will be useful to me as a member of the Board. I was treated very civilly, Lesseps making a point of showing me every consideration. At the dinner at Port Said he made me divide with himself the position of host . . . At Suez there was a French ironclad with an admiral on board; he intended to be with his ship at Ismaïlia on Monday evening, and he and his officers had been looking forward to placing their band of thirty musicians at the disposal of Mme de Lesseps and having a dance. We had a meeting of our Commission on Tuesday morning so Lesseps declined; but as I saw that he would have liked very much to accept in order to let Hélène (Mme de Lesseps) have some fun, I told him that I would return to Cairo and that he and General M—— (a dried-up old Indian) must return to Ismaïlia in the frigate. The old man was so pleased he ran off like a schoolboy to telegraph to Hélène that I had given him leave, and that she was to prepare to receive the admiral and his thirty musicians. I said it was only right that the two young men should go and have their dance and that I should go and do the work, so on Monday Primrose and I came back to Cairo, and the others went up the Canal with the admiral . . . Yesterday morning in the absence of Lesseps I presided over the Commission. We have had no violence or difference of opinion of any sort since the first meeting . . . We are getting together a quantity of information which

will form the basis of a great deal of our future proceedings. One piece of news I have that will make my existence here more tolerable, the Vivians go to Alexandria on Thursday and have offered me their house. Now I have been dreading a summer at Shepheard's and have therefore accepted Vivian's offer which was very kindly made, and all the more because the arrangement will be in a certain sense advantageous to him. The house is the best of all the European houses in Cairo; it is beautifully furnished and suitable to the climate, the garden is full of flowers, and altogether it is a charming place. . . . Yesterday I called on Mme Nubar, who is a very nice, friendly, and sympathetic woman. Of course Nubar himself was our chief topic of conversation, and she naturally speaks to me quite freely. She is on good terms with the Princesses and even with the Viceroy, but it does not seem as if Nubar himself were likely soon to be in favour again. He is often spoken of here and frequently in most unjust terms, but that you know is the way of the country when a man is in disgrace. I dined last night at the Vivians'; Richard Burton and his wife were there. He is less a ruffian than I expected, but it is true, as Vivian says, that he has a hard and cruel face, and Mrs. Vivian says he frightens her. Mrs. Burton is what you might expect from her book, rather a gusher . . . Burton pretends to have succeeded in his enterprise,* and to have found quantities of silver ore. I am in doubt, however; he is not a veracious person, and there are good reasons for thinking that the mines are worked out. I told Mrs. Burton how we read her book two

* He had just returned from a mission to the peninsula of Akabar.

years ago, given to me by poor dear Virginia Gabriel, and how Virginia had marked passages of the book which she thought highly of. Mrs. Burton said it was long since she had heard anything which had given her such real pleasure, and asked if I could let her see the volumes with Virginia's marks. Dining here, too, were Brabazon, a clever man, who was out here in 1876—an excellent musician and artist, and Wade, whom I remembered to have heard sing at Virginia's. He sang last night quite delightfully, Brabazon accompanying. You see I have some pleasant moments to make up for all this worry and uncertainty.

April 25th, '78.

I called on Prince Hussein * this morning. He is Finance Minister, second son of the Viceroy, and is an intelligent and well-mannered man. My conversation was satisfactory with him in some respects. He is to supply our Commission with a mass of information and so far he has shown no indisposition to help us. Romaine and Fitzgerald, whom I saw afterwards, have offices in Hussein's Ministry, a beautiful palace which belonged to the wretched Mouffetish. There are, as you may well believe, all sorts of jealousies and susceptibilities among these various officials and not always between those of different nationalities. I shall study to keep out of all such questions, and so far am quite friendly with them all.

April 26th, '78.

. . . The Vivians go on Sunday, so we go into our grand quarters on Monday. They have both taken

* Proclaimed Sultan of Egypt by the British Government in 1914.

so much pain to make us comfortable, and it will be quite the nicest installation in Cairo. The garden is full of roses, and we have a lawn-tennis ground for evening exercise. There are an immense number of visitors, too many, indeed, for I have no time to do anything. Vivian's house being a little bit out of the way I shall be much less disturbed and hope to be able to work seriously. . . .

April 29th, '78.

We have now begun to take *vivâ-voce* evidence, and have just had Romaine under examination for three hours. He is a good, well-mannered man and a most honourable gentleman, but he has not grit enough for his place. If he had only known how to exercise the powers given him by the Goschen decree he might have done much to remedy the abuses which he contents himself with deploring. The day before yesterday all the Commissioners and Secretaries drove out to Ghizeh and put the unhappy Receiver-General of the Province to the torture (mental) of an uncommonly sharp examination; all his words taken down by a shorthand writer whom he must have thought to be an emissary of the devil! He lied, poor wretch, with persistency and thoroughness, and so I think will most, if not all, of the fellows we interrogate. . . .

May 1st, 1878.

Yesterday was a crisis, as usual on the day of payment of a coupon. The money was not made up till after 12 o'clock at night and the last £300,000 was only got by a dodge, ingenious and illegal, and

discreditable on the part of the Egyptian Government. The people of the country are being cruelly oppressed by taxes taken in anticipation and the Khedive will not put his hand in his pocket or sell an acre of land. . . . I assure you it made me quite sick at heart as we drove out to that inquiry at Ghizeh to pass palace after palace built and lavishly furnished by this man, and last of all the splendid new palace and park, which you remember our visiting in its early stage and on which we saw crowds of workmen employed, and all this time not one of his tradespeople are paid, and not a single one of the poor officials (except those of the railways, etc., who pay themselves) get a farthing's pay.

Romaine, Baring, and all the big European officials have not had their salaries paid for months, but it is less hard on them, who mostly have private means, than on the poor clerks who borrow money at 100 per cent. to keep themselves from starvation. We (the Commissioners) have to-day made a formal representation and a good practical suggestion for remedying in part this abominable state of things, and sent Lesseps to the Viceroy on the subject. The Viceroy refused point blank. Baring and I insist that the refusal shall be in writing, and we have begged Lesseps to send to the Viceroy formally a letter and form of decree that we have prepared. When we get his refusal to adopt our proposal we shall write him an uncommonly stiff letter, and shall probably publish the correspondence. Baring was inclined to make the question an ultimatum, but I pointed out that it was one of secondary importance, and that if we were to have a regular rupture it must

be upon a bigger question. We shall stand well with the public, I think, if we take the course I propose, but not if we throw up the whole concern upon the point of the employés' salaries. . . .

A rather important piece of news has just been communicated to me. Prince Hussein is to cease being Finance Minister, and I believe it is in contemplation to appoint a European, and in all probability the post will be offered to me. Don't mention this to a single soul. You understand that Finance Minister is a very different thing from all the other proposals that have been discussed, and in the altered political circumstances of the country through the interference of England, it would, no doubt, be possible to secure guarantees which would insure both the stability and independence of the office.

May 6th, '78.

I see more and more every day how difficult a task we have before us. All the accounts, statements, and figures hitherto supplied, and on which existing arrangements are based, are totally unreliable, and everything must be reconstructed from bottom to top. . . .

CHAPTER XIII

COMMISSION OF INQUIRY (*continued*)

1878

Offer of Finance Ministry—Struggle with the Khedive—The Dairas—Chérif Pasha—Alexandria—Desmichels—Barrot.

May 7th, 1878.

To-DAY I breakfasted at Abdin, and was for nearly four hours with the Viceroy. He has made me the offer to be his Minister of Finance, and hopes that he will have the approval of H.M.'s Government. I suppose the latter will be given readily enough, but for myself I evaded giving a direct answer. It is a very serious responsibility, and requires a great deal of thinking about before I arrive at a decision. . . .

May 9th, '78.

This morning I again breakfasted with the Khedive. You see I am in high favour. He treats me on the footing of his future Minister, and I need hardly say in a very different way from that in which he treats his native Ministers. I have written to Vivian confidentially about the Viceroy's proposal and shall write to Sir Stafford Northcote, and probably to Nubar, but very confidentially, as the French will make a devil of a row when it comes out.

13*th May*, '78.

The Khedive has agreed, chiefly at my instance, to issue a decree by which the payment of the salaries of the unfortunate officials will be assured in future; he has behaved extremely well in this matter, and I am in hopes that he will continue to show the same conciliatory spirit as he has done on this occasion. . . .

Undated.

My relations with the Khedive are becoming less friendly. Our inquiry is beginning to touch questions which affect him personally. It is obvious that no thorough investigation such as is entrusted to us can be properly carried out which does not extend to his land acquisition and management. We have entered on this part of the inquiry and he is furious; ill, fever, etc., and altogether in a most objectionable frame of mind. I have not seen him for some days. We, the Commissioners, are quite firmly united and determined to carry the thing through. If he continues to put obstacles in our way we shall have to consider what our course is to be, but we are resolved to act decidedly; in fact, so strong in their views are some of my colleagues that I see I shall have to act as a restraining influence. Last night we went to Mme Nubar's. I like her more and more. She is a sensible woman and an excellent counsellor for her husband. . . . How curious the Oriental character is; she is devoted to the Pasha, yet she tells me—of course confidentially—that, notwithstanding that this *enquête* is practically his own child, and that he has been

straining every nerve to lead it in the direction of his own views, I must not expect assistance from him. If he were recalled and made minister he would "cajoler" me, not intentionally, but in the interests of the Khedive, whose *serviteur* he would be . . . The news of my being offered the Ministry of Finance got out somehow and sent up the Egyptian Funds in London and Paris 2 per cent. In his present mood I don't think the Viceroy will repeat the offer, at least just now. I do not much care how it goes; I shall steadily do my duty on the *enquête* without being influenced by any personal consideration.

19th May, '78.

Schaeffer * breakfasted here just now. It is like home having a familiar face so near. He is a good fellow. In a quiet way I do a little diplomacy, and I gave him and the German Consul-General their lesson for an interview they were to have to-day with the Viceroy. They have done just what I wished.

We are entering upon a struggle with the Khedive I fear. My colleagues and I are quite determined to examine the whole question of his private estates and those of his enormous family. I refuse to recognise the arbitrary distinction he seeks to establish between the Khedive "Chef de l'Etat" and the Khedive "simple propriétaire." His immense lands have been acquired at the expense of the population, and he pockets the rents and manages the estates so infamously as to add greatly to the charges of the country and the misery of the people. The

* The Austro-Hungarian Consul-General whom I had known very well when he was Consul-General in London.

decree appointing us says we are to examine "tous les éléments de la situation finançière"; this question of the Viceroy's land is the most important of all these elements, and if he refuses to allow us to go into it our work becomes a mockery.

We *have* approached the question and he at once became ill. The Director-General of the Daira refused to obey our summons to come to be examined until he got permission from the Khedive. Riaz Pasha and others conveyed to H.H. our indignation at this and our firm resolution not to be trifled with. He is frightened, it seems, but not in good disposition, and has desired to see me at 11 a.m. to-morrow.

Vivian, I am glad to say, comes to Cairo to-night. He wrote me a long letter about the *enquête* in which he says: "I am with you heart and soul and on this point I will speak as strongly as is required and will support it with all the weight and authority of the Government, and I am prepared to tell the Khedive that it will be at his personal risk and peril if he thwarts you. Only tell me when it is necessary for me to speak in this sense and I am ready, as I am determined as far as lies in my power to prevent it. The inquiry shall not be defeated by the Khedive's tricks and wiles. I rather revel in the idea of a fair stand-up fight in a good cause, and I feel sure we shall win in the end." This is good speaking and very encouraging. . . .

May 21st, '78.

Just back from Abdin; the Khedive in view of our attitude about his estates and the pressure of the foreign Consuls to make him pay his judgment

debts, announced to me his intention of making certain concessions, which, so far as they go and if he keeps his word, are satisfactory. He wishes to save the estates that he has accumulated in the names of his family. To effect this he has offered to give up a very large portion of his lands absolutely. I think there is a ground-work for a compromise. He assumes that I am to accept the position of Finance Minister and he will also appoint an Inspector of the Provinces who will be really a Minister and a powerful one. . . .

May 24th, '78.

On Tuesday Vivian and I had rather a violent scene with the Viceroy. He makes difficulties as to our looking into questions respecting his Dairas, or family estates, and we insist upon our right to do so. I act as much as possible as pacifier, and undertake if only he will tell us all we want to know, that our inquiries shall be made in a manner as little unpleasant as possible. However, on this occasion he was very much up in the stirrups and declared that if he was to be treated like a criminal he would not accept to be tried by our Commission, but would appeal to a tribunal of representatives of the Powers and the Porte. I am quite as firm as my colleagues as to the object to be obtained, but wish to proceed as far as possible "en gardant les convenances et avec les égards dus" to a man who after all, is ruler of the country. . . . Last night the Khedive sent Barrot to me "to make it up"; he said he heard I was vexed, hoped I was not angry, etc. He really is very much frightened, poor man. I really believe

I could be a better friend to him than any one here. I have no personal views, am quite independent, and am very willing to help him, if only he will co-operate with us, and not put his back up.

We shall probably have to go down to Alexandria in June to take evidence; afterwards I fear it will be indispensable to go into the Provinces, where it will be hot. Hitherto the weather has been quite lovely, heat bearable, beautiful mornings and evenings, mosquitoes not too bad, and as for flies Mme Nubar has given me a clever American dodge which winds up and sets going over your head two wings, which quite keep the brutes off.

May 31*st*, '78.

I have had a letter from the Chancellor of the Exchequer who says that a letter I had written to him about the Finance Minister question had been considered in the Cabinet that day. "The Cabinet thought it would be desirable to encourage the idea of your accepting the Ministry of Finance if it should be offered to you on terms which would give you a proper status and give a reasonable security for the office being maintained for a certain time. They thought, however, that if this were done it might be going too far to nominate also an English Inspector-General of the Provinces, and that it would be better if you could be appointed Finance Minister with authority to cover the work which is intended for the Inspector. We agree with you in thinking that you would be better without a French 'double.'" There is more to the same purpose from Sir Stafford Northcote. He is always encouraging and a help to

me; for the moment, however, this question has retired into the background. . . .

We continue examining witnesses, chiefly natives. The poor devils lie and equivocate, but no wonder. There are all sorts of rumours about of the death or disappearance of officials whom we are likely to summon and whose evidence might be damaging to the Khedive, but of course there is exaggeration in these stories. I believe that Khalil Aga, the Princess Mother's chief eunuch (a great rogue), has been sent away in consequence of some question I asked.

You remember old Chérif Pasha. He boasted at Abdin that nothing would induce him to obey a summons from the Commission. Directly I heard this, I proposed to my colleagues to call him, and wrote to ask him to come next Monday. He replied that he would be glad to have in writing the questions on which we wanted information. I have sent him a reply stating generally the lines of examination and begging him still to come on Monday. Meanwhile he has run off to Alexandria. I am determined he shall come and if he makes any more difficulties there will be a row. . . .

June 2nd, '78.

I am now off to the War Office to examine with M. de Malaret certain suspected malpractices. I like M. de Malaret, he is a gentleman and thorough. I believe he is secretly engaged in combating the idea of my becoming Finance Minister. I do not mind a bit, it is all fair play and he probably does not know I am aware of his proceedings. . . .

June 5th, '78.

The last few days I have been having a fight with Chérif Pasha who refused to attend our Commission. We stood to our guns as a matter of principle was involved, and our authority and influence would have been greatly damaged had we given way. Last night he resigned both his offices—Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of Justice. It is a victory for us and will strengthen our position, though I am sorry the fight should have been forced upon us. Whether he acted in secret concert with the Khedive or not, I cannot tell, anyhow it will prove to H.H. that we are in earnest. Chérif is a great friend of Vivian's and I was a little afraid he might be vexed at the line I had taken, but he writes from Alexandria fully approving, and wrote an excellent letter of advice to Chérif, recommending him to give way. Vivian did not seem to anticipate Chérif's retirement, and I have not heard from him since it took place. The Khedive himself is still shamming illness. He sends me messages, but I have not seen him for ten days, though I have occasion to write to him. . . .

This morning at nine, meeting of the Commission, when I have to tackle a bad witness, one of the Ministers, who has already been before us and cut a very bad figure indeed. I complained of him to the Viceroy and told him that such a functionary brought disgrace on his Government. He has enriched himself in the usual way and is cruel and oppressive, but he is useful to the Viceroy, with whom he has influence. I take it he is not fond of me, but I don't

care, though I should not like to drink coffee with him! . . .

June 12th, '78.

I have just come up from Alexandria, where I went on Monday. The Vivians put me up at Ramleh, and were very kind. I had such lots of people to see, but particularly the judges, and very troublesome they are, full of susceptibilities and jealousies, and rubbishing ideas about their dignity and independence. I had to handle them very tenderly, but at last I could not help saying that if they raised so many difficulties as to the form and manner in which we should consult them, we might have to do without them altogether, and in justification would have to mention in our report why we acted independently of them. The subject on which I wished to advise with them was as to the establishment of some sort of local tribunals, which shall be a protection to the native inhabitants against the arbitrary authority of the Government, and it will not look well if the European Judges do not act cordially with us in a matter of such importance, and so nearly relating to their own business. . . . There was quite a fuss about my visit to Alexandria, and the Funds went up 2 per cent. on the strength of the rumour of what took place at a long interview I had with La Penna, the President of the Court of Appeal. . . . I have reason to suspect that Tigrane Bey (Nubar's nephew) has very secret orders from the Viceroy to Nubar. Tigrane left by last Brindisi boat, and would be in Paris next Sunday. I saw him a few hours before he left Cairo; he said nothing to me, or

indeed to any one, but I expect my guess is correct, and that the week after next Nubar will be here. The Khedive seems a good deal disgusted about the Chérif business; he can't put him back, for if he does, we shall insist on examining him. He has been abusing Nubar shamefully of late, but that proves nothing.

I am in deep disgrace; the Khedive knows how intimate I am with Nubar, and if he sends for him it will be partly because he hopes to work upon me through him. It will be strange if I should indeed be the cause of bringing Nubar back. He always built rather on me, I fancy, and his ideas generally come true. I shall be glad to see him, but his position will be most difficult. The *Enquête* is, in a great measure, his work. The Khedive complains bitterly that we are carrying out the programme traced by Nubar, which is true: yet if Nubar returns, it will be, in the Khedive's idea, to protect him against the *Enquête*, so he will be between hammer and anvil, with a vengeance. Nubar cannot, however, turn his back on reform, and be untrue to the cause he has been preaching for the last two years; trim his sails as he will, he must be an ally and friend to the Commission.

We have some hard fighting with the Khedive before us, but I am of good heart. We are wonderfully supported so far by public opinion, which attributes to the Commission the great rise in stocks which have rejoiced the hearts of the speculating and investing people of Alexandria. My personal popularity amuses me much, but I am quite indifferent to it, as I shall be when the inevitable reaction sets

in, and the Commission is held up to general execration. . . .

June 15*th*, '78.

The Khedive went down to Alexandria the night before last. I hear he was in a villainous temper; the cause, I presume, was two letters I had sent him; the one a very stiff document pressing for the information we had asked for about his estates; the other informing him that, as the Chérif correspondence had appeared in print, 'à mon insu et incomplète," I had sent the concluding letter, which was one to H.H., calling on him to order Chérif's appearance before the Commission, to the newspapers. He has begun now to intrigue with the French party, and expresses himself much disappointed with the English, who, he believes, want to get rid of him altogether. He shows a disposition to throw himself completely into the arms of the French. If the latter are loyal to their Alliance with us, and we pull together, he will be quite powerless. In the Commission there is still complete union. We work together with remarkable unanimity and cordiality. You cannot imagine how nice they all are to me. After all, I am really only Vice-President, and acting President, but they support me so heartily, and show such a complete absence of jealousy as to make my position both easy and agreeable. . . . After dinner to-night we went to the Blignières, where we found a few people, Schaeffer among the rest. They live in an old Arab house, with a capital garden, where we have been sitting in the moonlight. I had a great deal of talk with Schaeffer, who is a good friend to the

English interest, and is quite alive to the intrigues of the Khedive at the present moment to prevent this union between France and England on the question of Egypt. He showed me, confidentially, a letter relating an account given by the Khedive of his last interview with me. It was tolerably correct. H.H.'s chief complaint is that I am not content to limit the Enquiry to meeting the immediate deficit, but that I am interfering in matters of administration. It is perfectly true, and I told him I was sure he could never have meant to summon my colleagues and me to an Enquiry merely confined to a discovery of how to pay his debts. I told him I understood our mission to extend beyond those narrow limits, and we thought it our duty, in virtue of his own Decree appointing us, to search out the vices of his Government which had caused such disorder, and to try and find remedies for preventing its recurrence. The *truth* of his ill-temper is that we at once went for the chief cause of the mischief, viz., his great land estates, and we have been insisting on a thorough investigation in that quarter. His fears arise partly from apprehension that his lands will be confiscated to pay the debts of the Government, and partly from disgust at the revelations he may have to make as to the mode in which he has acquired and managed these estates. . . . I gather quite plainly that the French agent is playing false. With Vivian and me he pretends to support us to the fullest extent, and eggs us on to extreme measures, while in conversation with the Khedive he declares that the line of conduct of the Commission is entirely promoted by the English party in it, *i.e.* myself and Baring. I am

bound to say it is the Khedive himself who attributes to Desmichels this double game. I shall write at once to Vivian, and urge him to speak openly to Desmichels, telling him of the report spread by the Viceroy ; it is best, I am sure, to play with the cards on the table.

Ramleh, *June 22nd*, '78.

The Khedive is fighting us hard. He came to Alexandria yesterday week, pledging himself to be back in Cairo to-morrow. I soon heard that he had no intention of doing anything of the sort, and I also learned that he was determined not to give way on certain matters on which we had insisted. At the same time he has been intriguing with Desmichels to create disunion between Vivian and me, and has been negotiating with his creditors without consulting the Commission ; in short, he was doing all he could to weaken and discredit us. To stop all this I proposed to my colleagues to adjourn to Alexandria at once. We should then be in immediate communication with the consuls, and by united and firm action we would have a better chance of carrying the day. I telegraphed to the Governor of Alexandria to provide suitable accommodation for our sittings in one of the public buildings, so as to make rather a public matter of our move, and Baring, Riaz Pasha, and I, with Primrose, Ermoli, etc., came down on Thursday night. De Blignières was to come last night and the others this evening. . . . Yesterday was a holiday, and Vivian had got up a regatta in the harbour. It was a pretty sight, but I got very tired. We were on board an Egyptian frigate, and I made the acquaintance of

numbers of the Alexandrians. Some of the women are very pretty, but of the Greek type, which is unsatisfactory because it is evident that the beauty won't last, and they all incline to *embonpoint*. Victor Lesseps' bride is one of these, and is very pretty. They are to be married next Saturday and Desmichels and I are to be his *témoins*. I had a great deal of talk with Tewfik, the Prince Héréditaire. Although one must be cautious in estimating the merits of an heir-apparent, yet I do not think one can be wrong in asserting that this one is an immense improvement in every way on his august father, and I am gradually coming to the opinion that the substitute of the one for the other is the only way out of the Egyptian difficulty.

Ramleh, *June 29th*, '78.

I have had a very busy time since I came down here. I have not had one moment's leisure until this morning when I must try and knock off some of my correspondence. We have been holding two sittings a day examining numbers of witnesses, etc. . . . Nubar has received offers to come back, but so far the negotiation has come to nothing . . . I called on the Viceroy with Vivian; the only visit I have paid him since I came here. My abstention had been noticed, and as I do not want to give him an excuse for saying I have been wanting in social proprieties I made a morning call, but did not go alone. He was very civil, but we did not talk business. His palace is a most pleasant residence with a lovely look out over Alexandria harbour. . . .

The Khedive has given us two detailed lists of

the estates of his family; one showing those that he abandoned to us: the other those that he retains (or hopes to retain). The revenue from the former he puts at £167,000 and the latter at £223,000 a year. At my suggestion the Commission has merely taken note of H.H.'s communication, leaving him in the dark as to the impression produced upon us, and as to our ulterior intentions. Of course he has lied to us and has kept back all account of other large properties, no doubt the most valuable of all. Our position has now become very difficult, and requires much circumspection. He thinks, of course, that he has blinded us and let us in, but he is mistaken. The only question is as to the next move. I believe it is quite true that his authority in the country has been rudely shaken by our proceedings, but the native population has not acquired sufficient confidence to rally round us. We must keep pegging away at H.H., who is everything in this country, by being firm, and putting aside all consideration for him personally, which weighs but lightly in the balance against the higher interests concerned. I think we shall succeed in our two main objects, viz. (1) forcing him to surrender sufficient to meet the immediate financial difficulty, (2) crippling, if not entirely destroying his powers of evil for the future. . . .

Cairo, *July 5th*, '78.

I went down to Alexandria the night before last, returned last night, and was up this morning soon after six o'clock, none the worse, although the two journeys were rather trying. I went for Victor Lesseps' wedding. Much against my will, and under protest,

I had to attend in evening dress. I went first to the house of the bride's brother-in-law, M. Rodoconachi; Charles Lesseps was there and some others. We drove to the palace of the Catholic Archbishop where the first ceremony took place in the private chapel; numbers of people there and crowds in the streets. I sat on the right of Victor Lesseps as his best man and afterwards signed the register. Then back to the house where the Greek ceremony took place in the drawing-room performed by the Patriarch of Alexandria, a genial old creature, and a number of priests. It is a curious and pretty service. In the first part of it the bridegroom and bride walk in procession round the room with crowns of flowers on their heads; Victor looked very funny. Then a capital breakfast: I the honoured guest at the right of the bride; my health drunk, but no speeches. . . .

Cairo, 8*th July*, '78.

I have not seen the Khedive for some time, but my private accounts (quite trustworthy) are that he is working heaven and earth to create differences between the English and French, and that he has given personal orders to the Inspector-General of Upper Egypt to falsify the books of the Provinces, as he heard we were about to come up there. He is quite incorrigible.

An amusing trait of Barrot; he had been in the habit of coming a great deal to me and abusing the Viceroy in most violent terms; so much so as to put me excessively on my guard as to what I said to him, and to provoke continual observations from people he met here as to the impropriety of his conduct,

considering his personal relations to his master. At that time it seems that his position was in considerable jeopardy. He was not consulted by H.H., and was kept in ignorance as to what was being done; indeed, it was generally believed that his game was up and that he was to go. He came, therefore, partly to get information from me, partly, I suspect, to annoy the Viceroy by pretending to be intimate with me, who am supposed to be H.H.'s enemy. It appears now that he has made it up with his "august master" and for a week we have not seen him. I hear, privately, that he gives out, "that he really cannot come to my house as it pains him too much to hear the way the Khedive is spoken of there!" Isn't he a nice traitor?

A delightful sell was perpetrated the beginning of last week. On my return from Alexandria I found all Cairo in excitement in consequence of a distribution of printed handbills announcing the occurrence of—

THE GREAT EVENT ON TUESDAY JULY 2nd

and signed with the initials H.P. Now the great fear of the Khedive is of Halim Pasha, his uncle, who is agitating to get rid of him, and announcing himself publicly as a pretender to succeed him. Next day more handbills:

"MARDI 2 JUILLET, DIX HEURES,
IRREVOCABLE. H.P."

For several days and nights the public and secret police scoured the town, the guard was doubled at the Treasury, and I have no doubt the little man

at Ghizeh trembled. On the day announced, another handbill :

"CHANGEMENT DE DOMICILE DE . . . À . . . DE HÉLIOS, PHOTOGRAPHE."

Instead of the redoubted Halim, it was merely a Yankee dodge 'pour faire la reclame' of an advertising photographer! The Acting Governor, his Deputy, and the Prefect of Police have all been dismissed as a consequence of this practical joke.

Cairo, *July* 11*th*, '78.

The French Consul-General has, I am happy to think, been baffled in a little game he has been playing, and is turning all his abuse and hostility against the Commission, and myself in particular. Vivian and I have beaten him out of the field, and he leaves for France next Tuesday, vowing vengeance, and declaring that he will do all he can to show us up when he is in Paris. I don't mind a bit provided my own Government are convinced, as I am myself, that we have done well and have not (as Desmichels declares) gone beyond the limits of our authority. We have been here three months to-morrow, and have gained already four great concessions from the Khedive.

(1) The surrender of a large portion of his private estates.

(2) An undertaking to establish a system of Justice for the natives. (Of course we shall not be satisfied with his mere promise.)

(3) The decrease in the rate of tax on a certain class of lands.

(4) The reduction of expenditure of £1,200,000 a year. These are great results to have gained in so short a time, and they are, I hope and believe, only the precursors of other reforms.

Desmichels' anger is founded, I believe, on the offer made to me of the Ministry of Finance, and he has done all he can to frustrate a measure which he sees will be favourable to English interests. I have been kept well informed of what was passing, and heard that Desmichels was to see the Khedive to-day before leaving for France. Having reason to believe that he would make a final attempt to induce H.H. to abandon the idea of an English Minister, if not to extract a promise of the appointment of a Frenchman—I suggested to Vivian to be beforehand and to see the Khedive yesterday, which he did. The result is that he fixed him to his promise in spite of some attempts of H.H. to get out of it. Desmichels, however, had so far influenced him that he would no longer hear of *me*, to whom, still at Desmichels' prompting, he attributes all the strong measures taken by the Commission. This I do not mind in the least, provided the place is filled by an Englishman. To put a Frenchman there with an English Inspector-General of the Provinces would create such elements of discord as would be most disastrous to this country. . . . Desmichels saw the Khedive to-day, but thanks to Vivian's action yesterday, found he could do nothing. . . . I hope all this does not bore you ; to me it is very interesting to play a part in so important a game, in which I

have, sincerely speaking, no concern beyond the satisfaction of doing some good to this unfortunate and ill-treated country, and promoting indirectly and harmlessly the interests of my own country.

I have spent all this morning in a scene of the "Arabian Nights." I went with two of my colleagues, a secretary, and an interpreter, to one of the principal Tribunals of Cairo, to examine a system of registering titles of property. It is a big building situated in the middle of the Native Cairo, and was crowded with clerks and native suitors. I sat on the divan in the big judgment hall beside the head judge, a fine gentlemanly Turk. I insisted that our work was not to interfere with the course of justice, so while we sat at one end of the room an inferior judge at the other tried cases—mostly quarrels between husbands and wives. He seemed to give very good summary justice. I reclined on the divan, looking out over the square filled with people, and a beautiful old mosque. Our room was crowded with natives and turbaned Turks, and it was a queer and picturesque scene—but I have seen many such since I came here, and have been into the oddest places—I doubt whether Europeans have often had such a thorough insight into the inner workings of this Government and people.

Early this morning I had a mysterious visit from a lady. I prudently sent Primrose to interview her, but she would only see me, saying she had an important communication. She was middle-aged and plain, as it turned out. She told me she had been sent to me secretly by the Princess Mustapha Fazil (la Grande Princesse she called her), widow

of the Khedive's brother, to represent the great distress in which she and her family are. She is the mother of the beautiful Nazli Hanem (widow of the late Turkish Ambassador in Paris), and has several other children. They are quite penniless and in the utmost distress and despair. The allowances granted to them have not been paid for a long time, and Mustapha Fazil left nothing but debts. Hearing I was kind-hearted she sent to interest me, to let her know what she might expect, and what the position of herself and the family was to be. I had heard from Mme Nubar about the distress of the family, and the Viceroy's complete indifference. She told me that Nazli Hanem when in Cairo quite lately had not money to hire a carriage, and that the Khedive would not place one at her disposal.

I told the lady to present my respects to the Princess and express to her my sympathy, but to explain that I had no authority to interfere in her favour, all I could undertake was not to lose sight of her claim, and to render any reasonable assistance that lay in my power. She said the Princess entreated that the step she had taken might be kept secret from the Khedive. . . .

CHAPTER XIV

COMMISSION OF INQUIRY (*continued*)

1878

Nubar Pasha — Desmichels' intrigues — Preliminary Report — Nubar's arrival—Report presented to Khedive—He accepts our conclusions—Request for my services as Finance Minister.

July 12th, 1878.

NUBAR'S letter to Prince Hussein, stating the conditions on which he would return, arrived yesterday, but I have not yet heard of the effect it has produced. Nubar sent me a copy, and I gave Vivian a copy to send home to H.M.'s Government, as Nubar wishes no secret to be made of his views. He declines to return unless he receives satisfactory assurances of the serious intention of the Khedive to enter upon the path of reform. Privately to me he says he would only take office if he hears that I accept the Finance Ministry. His idea of course is that the presence of an English colleague would be a guarantee that the reforms be carried out, and would also secure him his own safety, and independence. The Khedive pretends that I refused the office, which is not true; the question, by agreement between H.H. and myself, was deferred.

Desmichels opposed Nubar's return strongly. He told the Khedive that if Nubar with his great reputation came back, people would say it was Nubar's

doing if matters went well, but if anything went wrong it would always be attributed to the Khedive. This was clever of Desmichels, and shows how well he understands the Khedive. It is vexatious that Desmichels should commence this hostile campaign, his is the first voice raised against us openly; even Goschen, who is a severe critic, writes to me in approval of our proceedings. . . .

July 15*th*, '78.

I think it is quite settled that Nubar returns. A telegram went to him the night before last from Prince Hussein, concocted by his august father, urging him to come at once, and I expect every moment to hear his final answer. He is much wanted, for the Government is in a state of complete confusion and a strong hand is needed. The Viceroy pretends that his hands are tied by the Commission. He told me one day that we were called the Provisional Government; in reality we have no executive power, and I decline to interfere or assume responsibility for matters which concern the regular administration. It suits the Khedive, however, to try and make difficulties for us.

I wrote to the Chancellor of the Exchequer by last mail an account of Desmichels' proceedings. He ought to be recalled, for nothing could be more mischievous than his conduct. I have openly expressed my opinion on the subject, and have taken up the challenge which he has thrown down to the Commission. I imagine that my opinions have been conveyed to him, for I received last night a very civil note from Alexandria, expressing his regret for not

having seen me before his departure which takes place to-morrow. . . .

The night before last I had a grand dinner-party, all the Commission including Riaz Pasha, and the two remaining wives, in honour of Mme de Blignières, who departs to-morrow. You have no idea how pretty our dinner-parties are on the terrace looking over the garden, with the fountain playing and the big, clear Egyptian moon shining on us and almost eclipsing the lamps and candles; with quantities of flowers on the table, and much cooling drink! . . .

July 20th, '78.

. . . I suspect that the sudden goodwill of the Khedive to the English is owing to two circumstances: the alliance between Nubar and myself, and the occupation of the Island of Cyprus, which proves to him that we are going to be the big people of the future in these parts, and not the French. In the meantime he is too cocky and I don't like his mood. After all his poor little tricks and dodges come to nothing when he is well grappled with, so even if he is meditating some new coup to baffle us it won't interfere in the least with what we are doing. He thinks no doubt that Nubar will help and save him, so he will, very likely, but not in the way the Khedive hopes . . .

July 25th, '78.

One day when I was sitting at the Commission I was informed that some native ladies were in the anteroom and had urgently asked to see me. They were members and servants of the family of the late Abbas Pasha, Viceroy of Egypt before Saïd Pasha. They

threw themselves at my feet, and in despairing accents explained that all their property had been taken from them, and that they were in a state of the direst penury and misery. I consoled them as well as I could, but directly they left the building they were seized by the police and thrown into prison. On learning what had occurred I consulted my colleagues who considered that a great affront had been put upon the Commission, which was empowered by a decree to receive and hear any witnesses who might present themselves. It was agreed that I should at once see the Khedive and make a strong protest to him. Accordingly I called upon H.H. and remonstrated with him in the strongest terms against the action of the officials. As he seemed disinclined to attach much importance to what had taken place, I insisted that unless satisfaction was given to the Commission we should have to consider the necessity of suspending our sittings; and I requested the immediate dismissal of the Prefect of Police who must be held responsible for the affront offered to the Commission. After some hesitation on the part of the Khedive the Prefect of Police was dismissed, and the dismissal has had a good effect and has rather astonished the Cairo public. Prince Hussein cannot understand what the Commission means by interfering in such matters, and thinks we are going too far. We shall go much further, I expect, before we have done.

Barrot is in a queer position. I call him "my friend the traitor," because he comes and tells me all sorts of things about and against the Khedive, and, of course, tells the Khedive all he hears when he

comes to me. I naturally, therefore, adapt my conversation to my company. I say to him, "Here comes my 'Barrot-meter.' I am 'a la hausse' today as I am honoured by a visit from Barrot Bey." Just now the English interest being in the ascendant he is very assiduous, but for a week or two when the Khedive was playing the French game my Barrot-meter never came near me. Like all the other Frenchmen he is dead against Nubar, but he pretends to me (knowing that I am Nubar's friend) that he is the only man; that he has always preached to the Khedive the necessity for his recall, etc. Poor Barrot, he does not know whether to resign, or whether he is likely to be kicked out if he does not resign, and so he is in a curious condition of uncertainty. Do you remember Blum whom I used to see in 1876 because he was the only man from whom I could get correct information? He now holds the place of Chef de Cabinet at the Finance Ministry of which he is the life and soul. He is acknowledged to be completely honest and his ability and energy are remarkable. Every one speaks well of him and likes him. The Khedive, the Controllers, the Commission—in fact all of us, make use of him, and indeed I don't know how we should get on without him. . . .

July 29th, '78.

I had a letter from Sir Stafford Northcote by the last mail, in which he said that he had just got the letter I had written him about Desmichels and that he would at once see Lord Salisbury on the subject.

August 1st, '78.

H. O. writes to J. O. that Lord Beaconsfield has spoken to a friend of his in very favourable terms of me, and in answer to an inquiry whether I was going to Turkey had said "the Government did not wish me to leave Egypt where I was the right man in the right place."

We shall have our preliminary report ready in a few days—about the time of Nubar's arrival, which I expect will be this day week—and then will come a tussle with the Khedive, who must find the necessary funds. I want Vivian to stay for that, and afterwards he may go, and may possibly be able to render help in London. . . . I said, three months ago, when the Commission were so caressed and praised, that in a short time they would throw stones at us in the streets of Alexandria, and my prediction is coming true, for we are not as popular as we were, and I am sure that if we do not carry every point as they wish we shall be howled at; all of which, praise or abuse, is a matter of supreme indifference to me, and to my colleagues. . . .

August 2nd, '78.

A few nights ago we went to a wonderful performance in the courtyard of the Harem at Abdin. A sort of religious fête. Turning dervishes; half mad fanatics eating sharp broken glass, scorching themselves with torches, and eating serpents alive. The latter performance soon drove me away, but it was a curious Eastern spectacle: the courtyard lighted with coloured lanterns, beautiful tents, carpets, etc., coffee and sherbet. I was received by a Pasha, the head of the family Daira, and by the

Khedive's Master of Ceremonies, who conducted me to a seat of honour on a sofa. In the morning we had seen a Dosa, namely, the Sheikh riding over the bodies of the believers in a crowded part of the town: a singular and horrid sight. . . .

Nubar doesn't arrive till the 15th, but I am glad of his delay as he has been able to see Lord Beaconsfield, and do other useful work, I have no doubt. The Khedive is much put out at the delay in his arrival; he is as impatient as a lover.

August 12*th*, '78.

We have settled our first Report and it will be in the hands of the Viceroy in a few days. Blignières goes to-day, Baring begs a holiday as well, Kremer ditto. The long and short is that there is a regular break-up, and nothing more is likely to be done by the Commission, as a body, till October. My position thus becomes rather embarrassing. I certainly cannot get away yet; Nubar arrives on Thursday, and I must be on the spot to back up the conclusions of our Report. Vivian will also stay for a time with that object. I must then communicate with H.M.'s Government and be guided by their wishes as to my future movements. If I can get a run to Syria or Cyprus I should like to, but just at present it is impossible to decide anything. I am afraid our Report will not give general satisfaction, but it will, I think, satisfy reasonable and intelligent people who take the trouble to study it, and it is really a good report. . . .

Ramleh, *August* 18*th*, '78.

Nubar arrived on Thursday morning and was carried off at once to the Viceroy. I called on him

in the afternoon. He was, I think, sincerely affected at seeing me : he embraced me and the tears stood in his eyes. Later in the day I took Vivian to him. He arrived in the nick of time, for I shall present our Preliminary Report to the Viceroy to-morrow or next day at latest, and we want all the influence that can be obtained to make H.H. accept our conclusions. Nubar pledges himself (and had already done so in London) to insist on the complete surrender by the Khedive of *all* his lands. This is the chief point of our Report, which I carried with some difficulty. I *think* the Khedive will yield. He certainly will if he is well handled, and I am trying to manage that he shall yield in such a manner as will in some degree rehabilitate him in public opinion. Nubar has fallen into my views, and between us I am in good hopes that a useful stroke may be effected.

I hardly know how the public will take our Report and am a little nervous about it. I think it may at first produce a certain disappointment among the common speculators, and the unreasoning creditors, who build their hopes on the Commission and who expected us to discover a mine of gold. If the Khedive accepts our proposals and provides the means necessary for making up the deficit, the situation will be much simplified ; but until we know what he will do we are unable to make any recommendations as to rate of interest, date of payment of the floating debt, etc. All Alexandria is in a state of expectation for our Report. We are having it printed privately and Vivian will be able to send a press copy to the Government by this mail. . . .

Nubar dined here (Vivians) on Friday night.

He is full of my being Finance Minister with very ample powers, making me virtually Prime Minister. I have not discussed details or committed myself in the least. Vivian and Primrose believe that H.M.'s Government would give me two years' leave. I do not think they would, though in reality if it be an object to them that I should stay here, there is no sort of reason why it should not be done. The difficulty about my accepting an office which would oblige me to give up my English office permanently, is this : that the equivalent I should have to demand would be so considerable that its acceptance would create a bad impression (especially in the present unsatisfactory condition of the finances) and would prejudice my influence and English influence generally. All these difficulties would be got over if H.M.'s Government would give me leave of absence. Repington as Acting Controller, and Court as Acting Deputy, would carry on the work of the National Debt Office perfectly well, and of course the justification of my going away temporarily is that I shall be engaged on service useful to British interests.

This climate in summer does not suit me and I now feel quite ill ; even Nubar says I must be off as soon as possible for a change. A fair copy of the Report arrived this afternoon from Cairo, and I shall present it, if I am better, to-morrow. Meanwhile Nubar is fighting hard to induce the Khedive to accept our conclusions, which I have communicated to him. The Khedive is having an awful time of it with his wives, etc. Tewfik, the eldest son, who is an excellent fellow, has declared that he surrenders every acre of land. . . .

We had a little Parliament here last night: Nubar, Riaz, Vivian, Baring, Kremer, self. The two Pashas were sent to treat with us as to the amount of civil list we would recommend in return for a surrender of the families' lands. I declined to be a party to any compromise, or even to discuss the matter and my colleagues took the same line. Nubar takes our answer to H.H. to-day; I still think he will capitulate. If he does it will be a great victory for us, and I hope I shall get away next week or the week after.

Nubar understands my difficulty about taking office here. I told him it was impossible to accept a big sum of money. He asked if I would accept a landed estate worth £2500 or £3000 a year to retire upon, in addition to £5000 a year salary. I said the same objection would apply to an estate. I think you will approve, but don't talk of all this. . . .

Ramleh, *August 20th.*

I have been able to go into Alexandria to see the Viceroy and present him our Report. I shall wait this week to give him time to come to a determination and then my presence would not only be useless, but would be very embarrassing, as the meetings of the Commission are suspended until the 16th October. Whether I return here or not must be an open question, and will depend partly on the Khedive, partly on H.M.'s Government.

Ramleh, *August 22nd*, '78.

We have achieved a great triumph. This morning the Khedive surrendered without reserve. He

accepts all our conclusions and surrenders every acre of land belonging to himself and his family. It is more than any one ever dared to hope, and I come in for the chief share of the credit of so great a result; though all I have had to do has been to stick firmly to my determination not to give way one single inch; feeling sure from my knowledge of the Viceroy's character that it was the best and surest way of attaining the end in view. Only a few people know the news yet, but it is expected to have a great effect.

The Viceroy will make a formal announcement to me, which he will then hand me in writing; and at the same time Nubar will write to Vivian by order of H.H. to ask H.M.'s Government to lend me as Finance Minister. Vivian is most keen about it and will urge it personally to Lords Beaconsfield and Salisbury, while Nubar will write to Northcote. They consider that I should be useful on account of the experience I have gained, and because I am known now. They say my name is known in every village in Egypt. . . .

Ramleh, *August 23rd*, '78.

This has been an important day for Egypt and a satisfactory one for me. At five this afternoon the Khedive made me the speech announcing his acceptance of our proposals and his intended reforms, which had been prepared for me by Nubar and slightly corrected by himself. I made him a suitable answer and he then handed me a written copy of his speech. H.M.'s Government will be asked to lend me as Finance Minister for a couple of years. I

don't suppose they will agree. If they don't I see no way of accepting, meanwhile I am told my popularity knows no bounds, and they say a grand ovation is being contemplated for me. All Alexandria is in high excitement over the Viceroy's surrender. The funds have gone up like wildfire, and I am in some hopes our friends the Rothschilds may be inclined to take the matter up, which will be a real crowning of the edifice. . . .

Ramleh, *August 26th*, '78.

I send you a copy of the Magna Charta of Egypt! The Viceroy's speech to me has produced an excellent effect, and they say the only thing wanting is my acceptance of the Finance Ministry. I don't know what marvels are not to result if I remain here! You did not know I was such a wonderful conjuror; I am sure I did not!

I shall start by the Brindisi boat on Saturday next, the 31st. My only idea about returning here is to do so if H.M.'s Government give me two years' leave of absence; I don't otherwise see my way. I can make *any* terms, but you will be the first to advise me not to take advantage of my position if by so doing I forfeit my reputation and lose the confidence that is placed in me. However, we will talk of all this, please God, in a few days.

CHAPTER XV

NUBAR PASHA

Boghos Bey—Nubar and Ismaïl—International Tribunals—Nubar and Lord Beaconsfield—Extract from the Preliminary Report—The Khedive's Declaration—M. de Blignières—Letters of Ismaïl, Nubar and Vivian.

NUBAR PASHA, who exercised so powerful an influence over the history of modern Egypt by his remarkable capacity and statesmanship, was a near relative of the famous Boghos Bey and a member of an old Armenian family. I knew him first through Mr. Larking, who was Agent in England for the Khedive, before I had any connection with Egyptian finance. His relative, Boghos Bey, the trusted Minister of Mehemet Ali, was thoroughly honest, and it was a favourite boast of his master in later days that Boghos had died a poor man! Upon one occasion, however, Boghos incurred the displeasure of the Viceroy who ordered him to instant execution. The unfortunate man was carried off from H.H.'s presence; but knowing well the hasty disposition of his master and the substantial claims he had on his good graces, he persuaded his captors to keep him in concealment, instead of putting him to death. Some days afterwards when Mehemet, seated on his divan, had to decide on some difficult question, he exclaimed, "Ah, why is not Boghos here to assist me with his

judgment!" Whereupon some of his attendants, seeing their chance, suggested that "Allah was Great, and that possibly he might have seen fit to spare so valuable a life," and in the meantime Boghos, who was concealed amid the crowd at the end of the room, gradually edged his way through it, and diffidently seated himself at the extremity of the divan furthest from his master. Mehemet couldn't help laughing as he recognised him, and Boghos was promptly taken back into favour.

Nubar was born in 1825 and educated in France where he acquired a perfect knowledge of French, and his writings in that language were of a high literary order. He entered the Egyptian administration at an early age, and accompanied Ibrahim Pasha on his visit to England in 184—. The late Baroness Rothschild told me that she remembered him on that occasion as a wonderfully handsome and attractive young man. His relations with Ismaïl Pasha were of a singular nature. Ismaïl cordially disliked him, but had sufficient acumen to recognise his remarkable abilities, and sought to make use of them accordingly. Ismaïl Pasha had a very complex character—a thorough Oriental *au fond*, he had acquired by residence in Europe and contact with Europeans a veneer of Western civilisation, the unreality of which could hardly be distinguished. Nubar thoroughly understood his man.

It should here be mentioned that Nubar Pasha, whatever his enemies may have alleged to the contrary, had really at heart the interests of the Egyptian population. The object of his life was to establish some system which should protect the

fellah from the arbitrary power of the ruler of the country and his subordinate officials. This could only be obtained by the establishment of organised and assured justice, independent of the will of the autocrat. Nubar's influence over the Khedive was sufficient to persuade him that the introduction of such a system, while giving him great prestige in the eyes of Europe, would gradually allow him to disentangle himself from the shackles of the usurers which were such a perpetual obstruction and so sore a grievance to him. Accordingly, under instructions from the Viceroy, Nubar undertook a diplomatic pilgrimage to the different European Governments, which resulted eventually in the establishment of the International Tribunals, which have had so beneficent an effect. On this, as on other occasions, the Khedive, clever man as he was, was circumvented by one cleverer than himself. The new tribunals checked his despotic powers in a manner he had never anticipated, and contributed largely to his eventual downfall. The International Tribunals remain a monument to the sagacity and intelligence of Nubar Pasha.

The present prosperity of Egypt is attributable, in my judgment, to two causes: first, indirectly, to the folly of Ismaïl Pasha in raising the opposition of foreign creditors by the exaggerations of his extravagance; secondly, to the statesmanship of Nubar Pasha, working in the best interests of his country. It has always been a subject of astonishment to me that our English authorities in Cairo did not seek to avail themselves of the great ability and proved patriotism of Nubar Pasha when they undertook the government of the country after the deposition of Ismaïl

Pasha and the liquidation of 1881. There was no real reason for distrusting him ; but even if there had been, it is a proof of intelligence in a ruler to make use of the best agent to his hand, which would undoubtedly in this case have been Nubar. A monument was erected to Nubar Pasha after his death, but the last years of his life were overshadowed by the reflection that the efforts he had made for the benefit of his country failed to receive recognition at the hands of those who had profited by his exertions and his genius.

If, however, he was not always appreciated at his just value, or if his claims were disregarded by those who for personal reasons may have dreaded his influence, it is interesting to recall the impression he made upon no less a person than Lord Beaconsfield, a pretty shrewd judge of men, when he was at the height of his power as Prime Minister of England. Nubar had an interview with him in the summer of 1878, and a few days afterwards Lord Beaconsfield, in a speech at the Mansion House, mentioned that he had just had the privilege of becoming acquainted with one whom he described as "a great Oriental statesman." Indeed, there seemed to be a sort of affinity between these two men, both of them of an Oriental origin, and possessing an order of intelligence not usual in Western statesmen. I remember that upon a subsequent occasion, when I was speaking to Nubar of Lord Beaconsfield in possibly rather irreverent terms (although as a matter of fact I had the greatest admiration and affection for him), he interrupted me with great earnestness, and reproved me, saying, "Non, non, mon cher, vous ne comprenez pas cet homme là,—c'est un poëte !"

During the earlier stages of the Commission of Inquiry Nubar was practically an exile from his country, and it was not until it was drawing to its conclusion, and when it was evident that the Khedive would be forced to a surrender, that Ismaïl found himself compelled once more to have recourse to the only man whom he considered capable of extricating him from the difficulties by which he was surrounded. Nubar was sent for, and returned to Egypt on the 15th August, and on the 20th I presented to the Viceroy the Report of the Commission. Its conclusions were of far too drastic a nature to be palatable to H.H., and the hesitation which he showed in accepting them is hardly to be wondered at. They involved practically a restitution of nearly the whole of the immense property which he and his family had acquired, and the abandonment of the arbitrary methods by which he had hitherto administered the country. Nubar energetically supported me in the representations which it was my duty to make to H.H., and it is, perhaps, doubtful whether without his assistance and influence the surrender would have been so complete as was eventually the case. On August 23rd, the Khedive sent for me to Ras el Tin, and read to me a formal declaration, which had been prepared by Nubar, and which he presented to me when I left the Palace. I append an abstract of the Report, and the Khedive's acceptance of its conclusions :

CONCLUSIONS DE LA PREMIÈRE PARTIE DU RAPPORT.

Il est dans les attributions de la Commission d'Enquête d'étudier et de proposer les réformes que cette situation

comporte. Mais un assez long délai nous est nécessaire pour combler les lacunes que présentent encore les renseignements que nous avons recueillis, et formuler, en précisant les détails qui permettent de l'appliquer, un plan complet de réorganisation financière.

Les causes qui entravent le développement de la richesse publique et ressources du Trésor, ainsi que les conditions dans lesquelles pourrait fonctionner une administration régulière, nous sont cependant assez connues pour que nous puissions dès à présent indiquer sommairement les principes dont nous nous inspirerons pour préparer, conformément aux termes des Décrets qui ont institué la Commission d'Enquête "le règlement destiné à assurer la marche régulière des services publics."

Aucun impôt mis en recouvrement, si ce n'est en vertu d'une loi publiée dans un recueil officiel.

L'exercice du pouvoir Legislatif entouré de garanties telles que les lois d'impôt puissent être appliquées à tout les habitants de l'Egypte sans distinction de nationalité.

Tout les agents de perception mis effectivement sous les ordres du Ministère des Finances. Leur gestion contrôlée sur place par des inspecteurs ne relevant que de l'Administration Centrale.

Réforme de la comptabilité. Organisation d'une comptabilité budgétaire.

Constitution d'un fonds de réserve pour parer aux déficits qui peuvent résulter dans certaines années de l'insuffisance de la crue du Nil.

Organisation des moyens de Trésorerie prévus par l'Article 10 du Décret du 2 Mai, 1876. Le Gouvernement pourra alors, sans se préoccuper des échéances de ses dettes, réclamer l'impôt au moment où les contribuables peuvent le payer plus aisément.

Institution d'une juridiction indépendante devant laquelle seraient portées les réclamations en matière de contributions.

Organisation judiciaire protégeant efficacement les indigènes contre tout abus d'autorité.

Suppression de toutes les taxes d'un produit minime, dont le recouvrement est onéreux et difficile, ou dont la perception entraîne des mesures vexatoires. Leur remplacement, soit par une augmentation de l'impôt foncier qui grêve certaines terres, soit par des taxes plus productives et d'une perception plus facile.

Révision de l'impôt foncier. Rôles annuels établis au moyen d'un cadastre.

Révision des droits de douane et du mode de perception de l'impôt sur le tabac et le sel.

Règlementation du droit de prise d'eau dans les canaux d'irrigation.

Règlementation du mode d'exécution des travaux publiques. Suppression de la corvée pour tout travail non déclaré d'utilité publique.

Règlementation du service militaire-limitation de la durée du service et recrutement par voie de tirage au sort.

CONCLUSIONS DE LA DEUXIÈME PARTIE DU RAPPORT.

En résumé, la Commission Supérieure d'Enquête demande à Son Altesse d'affecter à la liquidation du déficit toutes les propriétés immobilières des Daïras, c'est-a-dire :—

1. Les domaines des Daïras Sanieh et Khassa, en tant qu'ils laisseront des ressources disponibles après le service des emprunts auxquels ils sont affectés.

2. Les propriétés des Daïras comprises dans les deux Tableaux transmis à la Commission par Son Altesse, et donnant un revenu de 400,646*l.*

3. Les propriétés bâties, appartenant aux mêmes Daïras, et dont le revenu serait, suivant les chiffres fournis par son Altesse, de 21,776*l.*

4. Les propriétés urbaines ou rurales qui pourraient avoir été omises sur ces listes, dont copie est ci-jointe.

Cette liquidation serait faite par les soins d'une Administration qui, investie des pouvoirs les plus étendus, aurait le droit d'administrer ces biens, d'en percevoir les revenus, de les aliéner ou de les affecter à la garantie d'un emprunt, et enfin de désintéresser tant les créanciers de l'Etat que ceux des Daïras.

Son Altesse le Khédive a adressé une lettre à son Excellence Nubar Pacha, pour le charger de la formation d'un Cabinet répondant aux idées exprimées dans le discours de son Altesse.

DISCOURS DE SON ALTESSE LE KHÉDIVE À MR. WILSON, VICE-PRÉSIDENT DE LA COMMISSION SUPÉRIEURE D'ENQUÊTE.

J'ai lu le Rapport de la Commission d'Enquête que vous avez présidée. Il est plein de détails, et si le temps vous a manqué pour approfondir plusieurs questions, je ne vous en remerçie pas moins vivement, vous et vos collègues, dont je regrette le départ, car j'aurais désiré les remercier aussi de vive voix.

J'espère que vous voudrez bien leur transmettre tous mes remercîments. Quant aux conclusions auxquelles vous êtes arrivé, je les accepte ; c'est tout naturel que je le fasse, c'est moi qui ai désiré ce travail pour le bien de mon pays. Il s'agit actuellement pour moi d'appliquer ces conclusions. Je suis résolu de le faire sérieusement, soyez en convaincu. Mon pays n'est plus en Afrique, nous faisons partie de l'Europe actuellement. Il est donc naturel pour nous d'abandonner les errements anciens pour adopter un système nouveau adapté à notre état social.

Je crois que dans un avenir peu éloigné vous verrez des changements considérables. Ils seront amenés plus facilement qu'on ne le croit. Ce n'est au fond qu'une simple question de légalité, de respect à la loi. Il faut surtout ne

pas se payer de mots, et pour moi je suis décidé à chercher la réalité des choses. Pour commencer et pour montrer à quel point je suis décidé, j'ai chargé Nubar Pacha de me former un Ministère.

Cette innovation peut paraître de peu d'importance ; mais de cette innovation, sérieusement conçue, vous verrez sortir l'indépendence Ministérielle, et ce n'est pas peu, car cette innovation est le point de départ d'un changement radical de système, et d'après moi, la meilleure assurance que je puisse donner du sérieux de mes intentions relative à l'application de vos conclusions. Vous allez nous quitter ; j'espère que vous nous reviendrez bientôt, mais je veux que vous emportiez la conviction que si vous avez eu un travail difficile et pénible, vos efforts ne resteront pas stérilles, car, vous le savez, tout germe et mûrit vite sur cette vieille terre d'Egypte.

In reporting these occurrences to Lord Salisbury in a despatch of the 23rd August, Mr. Vivian wrote : "This astonishing result is chiefly due to three causes : the fears of the Khedive of the effect on public opinion of the publication of the Report of the Commission ; the firm attitude of Mr. Rivers Wilson, and the tact and personal influence of Nubar Pasha." It is a curious circumstance that when this despatch was laid before Parliament these sentences were eliminated.

I think it only fair to mention that the actual drafting of the report was the work of M. de Blignières, the French Commissioner, who, although not always seeing eye to eye with Captain Baring and myself, gave us on the whole a thoroughly loyal support, and willingly undertook the duties of "rédacteur" whenever a "procès verbal" or a report had to be drawn up, as, of course, all our proceedings were in French.

M. de Blignières was a member of that extremely able class of French officials, the "Inspecteurs Généraux des Finances"—the "fine fleur" of the Civil Service. The French Government, with a greater sagacity than is sometimes shown by our own, choose their agents in Egypt chiefly from this class, and it would be difficult to find more able and accomplished men than M. de Blignières, M. de Liron Dayrolles, M. Bellaigne de Bughas, or M. Boutron the French Commissioner of the "Domains," *i.e.* the lands ceded by the Khedive and held as a security for the Rothschild loan of 1879.

I am bound to say that I do remember one exception to the excellence of the appointments of French officials in Egypt; it was that of the Marquis —— who held a highly paid and important office in Cairo. The circumstances under which he was appointed appear to be as follows. He was rather a well-known character in Paris society, and had carried his friendship with the wife of an intimate acquaintance to a somewhat indiscreet length. One day he received a visit from the husband, who entered the room abruptly, exclaiming, "Je sais tout!" The Marquis sprang to his feet in alarm, but the other promptly reassured him, saying, "Nous sommes amis depuis longtemps, vous allez me rendre un dernier service; prennez-la, elle est a vous!" The affair created a considerable sensation in Paris, and efforts were made to bring about an amicable divorce, with a view to a marriage. This arrangement didn't suit the Marquis, who excused himself on the ground of his want of means. Good-natured friends thereupon used influence to obtain for him the post in

Egypt which was then vacant. He secured the appointment, but did *not* marry the lady.

A day or two after the declaration of the Khedive he addressed a letter to Nubar Pasha instructing him to give effect to the new scheme of government. This letter, in conjunction with his declaration to myself, indicates the spirit in which he accepted the situation. How far he was sincere in these expressions is questionable, but undoubtedly the true character of the man displayed itself a few months later when he completely belied all his promises of reform, and adopted a course which led to his immediate downfall. On the 30th August Nubar Pasha, in the name of the Khedive, officially applied to H.M.'s Government for their consent to my appointment as Finance Minister. This consent was given and officially notified to Mr. Lascelles, who had temporarily replaced Mr. Vivian when the latter accompanied me to England on leave at the end of August. Shortly afterwards negotiations took place with the French Government which resulted, with the entire approval of Lord Salisbury, in the appointment of a Frenchman to the Ministry of Public Works. The man selected was M. de Blignières, my colleague on the Commission of Inquiry.

LETTER FROM THE KHEDIVE TO NUBAR PASHA.

Palais de Giseh, *le* 28 *Août*, 1878.

Mon Cher Ministre,

J'ai mûrement réfléchi sur les changements apportés dans notre situation intérieure et extérieure par les derniers événements, et au moment où vous vous

occupez de la mission que je vous ai confiée de former un nouveau Ministère, je veux vous confirmer ma ferme détermination de mettre les règles de notre Administration en harmonie avec les principes qui régissent les Administrations en Europe. Au lieu d'un pouvoir personnel, principe actuel du Gouvernement de l'Egypte, je veux un pouvoir qui imprime, il est vrai, une direction générale aux affaires, mais qui trouve son équilibre dans un Conseil des Ministres. En un mot, je veux dorénavant gouverner avec et par mon Conseil des Ministres.

Dans cet ordre d'idées, je pense que pour appliquer les réformes que j'ai déjà annoncées, les Membres du Conseil des Ministres devront être tous solidaires les uns des autres ; ce point est essentiel. Le Conseil des Ministres discutera toutes les questions importantes du pays ; l'opinion de la majorité, entraînera celle de la minorité. Les décisions seront donc prises à la majorité, et en les approuvant je sanctionnerai conséquemment l'opinion qui aura prévalu.

Chaque Ministre appliquera les décisions du Conseil sanctionnées par moi et concernant l'Administration qui lui est confiée.

Les nominations des Moudirs, Gouverneurs, Préfets de Police seront discutées entre le Ministre dont ils relèvent et le President du Conseil, et seront soumises à mon approbation par le Président du Conseil.

Le Ministre qui aura sous ses ordres immédiats les fonctionnaires sus-mentionnés aura le droit de les suspendre de leurs fonctions, mais après entente avec le Président du Conseil. Leur changement ou leur destitution ne pourra avoir lieu qu'après entente entre lui et le Ministre, Président du Conseil, sous ma sanction.

Les Ministres choisiront le haut personnel de leurs Administrations et soumettront leur choix à mon approbation. Pour les emplois secondaires, il suffira d'une simple lettre ou décision Ministérielle.

L'action de chaque Ministre s'exercera dans les limites de ses attributions, et les fonctionnaires et employés de

chaque branche d'Administration n'auront d'ordres à reçevoir que du Chef du Département dont ils font partie et ne devront obéir qu'à lui.

Le Conseil des Ministres siègera sous votre présidence, puisque je vous ai donné la charge et la responsabilité de cette nouvelle organisation.

Je pense que l'institution d'un Ministère possédant ces attributions n'est pas en dehors de nos moeurs et de nos idées, et est, au contraire, conforme à un des préceptes de la loi sacrée. Avec une organisation judiciaire généralisée, cette institution suffit pour répondre aux nécessités de notre état social et permet de réaliser mes fermes intentions.

Je mets toute ma confiance en vous pour appliquer les réformes que j'ai décidées et qui, je l'espère, donneront au pays toutes les garanties qu'il est en droit d'attendre de mon Gouvernement.

Croyez, etc.,
(Signé) Ismaïl.

MR. VIVIAN TO THE MARQUIS OF SALISBURY.
(Received September 6th.)

(Extract.) Alexandria, *August 30th*, 1878.

I had an audience yesterday of the Khedive to take leave of him, and to present Mr. Lascelles as Acting Agent and Consul-General. In bidding His Highness good-bye, I took occasion to congratulate him upon the excellent effect produced in England and elsewhere by his unconditional and spontaneous acceptance of the conclusions of the Commission of Inquiry, and I expressed my hope that the wise administrative changes which he had authorised Nubar Pasha to introduce would be carried into effect without delay, and that the sacrifices which His Highness had so loyally imposed upon himself and his family would relieve Egypt from the strain of the presence of the bailiff at her door, and allow her to turn her attention seriously to the reform of abuses.

The Viceroy begged me to support his request to Her Majesty's Government to lend Mr. Rivers Wilson as Minister of Finance.

I inclose an official letter from Nubar Pasha, asking Her Majesty's Government to allow Mr. Rivers Wilson to accept the post of Minister of Finance.

LETTER FROM NUBAR PASHA TO MR. VIVIAN.

Alexandrie, *le* 30 *Août*, 1878.

M. L'Agent et Consul-Général,

Son Altesse le Khédive vous avait manifesté, il y a déjà quelque temps, sou désir de voir Mr. Rivers Wilson accepter en Egypte le poste si important de Ministre des Finances, et vous avait prié de vous adresser à votre Gouvernement pour obtenir l'autorisation nécessaire pour Mr. Rivers Wilson, puisqu'il occupe des fonctions importantes en Angleterre.

Son Altesse me charge de vous rappeler sa demande, et elle espère que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté ne se refusera pas à y accéder et à mettre à sa disposition les services de Mr. Rivers Wilson, quand bien même ce ne serait que pour une periode déterminée.

Le Khédive vient d'adopter un système nouveau pour l'administration du pays. Mr. Rivers Wilson a puissament contribué, par la part qu'il a prise dans la Commission d'Enquête, à introduire des idées saines à ce sujet dans les esprits; il est déjà connu par la population, qui dans différentes occasions s'est adressée a lui; il connaît le pays et ses besoins; c'est ces diverses considérations qui font désirer à Son Altesse de voir Mr. Rivers Wilson prêter son Concours à notre Gouvernement. Le Gouvernement de sa Majesté la Reine a toujours porté un vif interêt à l'Egypte; il désire voir le pays s'administrer lui-même et son Gouvernement suivre une marche qui assure le bien-être des populations. C'est aussi le désire du Khédive; le but auquel il tend; et Mr. Rivers Wilson avec son expérience

acquise du pays aidera puissamment à consolider ce nouvel état de choses; aussi le Khédive et son Gouvernement espèrent que le Gouvernement de sa Majesté voudra bien mettre à la disposition du pays les services de Mr. Rivers Wilson pour une période qu'il déterminera lui-même.

Mr. Rivers Wilson, comme Ministre des Finances, aura sous ses ordres directs, en dehors de son administration proprement dite, les chemins de fer et les douanes, qui ont toujours en Egypte fait partie du Ministre des Finances. Les attributions et les pouvoirs que Mr. Rivers Wilson aura comme Ministre, sont définis, de même que pour les autres membres du Ministère, dans le rescrit constitutif de l'organisation nouvelle que j'ai l'honneur de vous communiquer par ma circulaire du 29 de ce mois.

Je vous prie, etc.,

N. Nubar.

CHAPTER XVI

MINISTER OF FINANCE

1878–1879

Rothschild loan—Diplomatic difficulties—The Ministry—Support of the Powers necessary—Mr. Vivian—His attitude towards the Ministry—Khedive makes use of it—Our reforms—The cadastral survey—Collection of taxes—The Kourbash—Mr. Fitzgerald's accounts.

THE work of the Commission of Inquiry having been so far successfully accomplished, I returned to England and put myself in communication with Baron Rothschild, with a view to raising a loan for the liquidation of the finances, upon the security of the lands surrendered by the Viceroy. The Baron was well inclined to come to our assistance, but not unnaturally, looking to the past history of Egypt, wanted some better security than one which relied upon the assurances and promises of its ruler. Our negotiations had made considerable progress when he suddenly declared that he could proceed no further unless the Paris house of Rothschild would join in the undertaking. This they refused to do unless the French Government would guarantee the loan, and the safety of the lands about to be mortgaged as a security for it. The French Government, however, would not agree to this, and for several weeks my negotiations with Messrs. Rothschild were held up while diplomatic

discussions were going on between Lord Salisbury and M. Waddington. At last Lord Salisbury directed me to go to Paris, and to see if I could make any arrangements with M. Waddington which might lead to a satisfactory settlement. I was fortunately able to do so, but on my return to London I found that the English house of Rothschild would not be content without a guarantee, similar to the French one, from the English Government. I was much disturbed by this decision, knowing how averse the British Treasury was for entering into engagements for maintaining the credit of foreign countries. As Baron Rothschild said that that was his final determination I told him that I would lay the whole case before our Government, hoping (although I was very doubtful of my success) that the great interest which they and the French Government had in the fortunes of Egypt, might induce the Cabinet to treat the present case exceptionally. I lost no time in going to Downing Street to see Sir Stafford Northcote, the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I explained the matter and appealed to him to meet, as far as possible, the requirements of the Rothschilds. He said, "I can do nothing without consulting Lord Salisbury, let us go and see him at once." We immediately went across to the Foreign Office and saw Lord Salisbury, to whom Sir Stafford made known my mission. Lord Salisbury asked me what I thought would satisfy the Rothschilds? Knowing well that a direct guarantee was out of the question I answered that I thought it would be sufficient if the English and French Governments would undertake to nominate Commissioners, whose duty it should be to administer the surrendered

estates, collect the revenues and apply them to the service of the debt. Such an arrangement, without implying a parliamentary financial obligation, would constitute a moral obligation which would practically place the proposed loan under the protection of the two Powers. Lord Salisbury, turning to Sir Stafford, said: "Well, having gone so far, don't you think we may accept Wilson's proposal?" The Chancellor assented, adding that he must hurry off to catch his train, but that he would leave me with Lord Salisbury to complete the arrangement. Lord Salisbury at once took up his pen and rapidly drafted a letter to the Rothschilds undertaking to give effect to my recommendation.

The next morning I called upon Baron Rothschild to give an account of my interview. I found that my intelligence had been anticipated, for he had already received Lord Salisbury's letter, and I remember vividly the satisfaction he displayed. A communication similar to Lord Salisbury's having been made by M. Waddington to the French house of Rothschild, nothing remained for me but to arrange the terms of the loan. This was no very easy matter. I tried to make the best terms I could for the Egyptian Government, whose servant I now was, while my friend the Baron tried to surround the loan with every possible precaution. At one moment, indeed, we very nearly came to an open rupture, but at length everything was settled satisfactorily, and the contract for the loan, which was for £8,500,000, was signed on October 31st.

Having completed my business I returned immediately to Egypt in company with M. de Blignières

and the new Ministry entered upon its functions at once. Its composition was as follows: Nubar Pasha, President of the Council; Mr. Rivers Wilson, Finance Minister; M. de Blignières, Minister of Public Works; Riaz Pasha, Minister of Interior; Ali Pasha Moubarek, Minister of the Wakfs; Ratib Pasha, Minister of War. M. de Blignières and myself had, it will have been observed, at the request of the Khedive, been nominated by our respective Governments to the two Ministries assigned to us. Ratib and Moubarek Pashas occupied, naturally, subordinate positions in the Ministry. They were both respectable and honest men, and willing to work towards the amelioration of their country. Ratib Pasha was a Circassian by birth; he had always served in the army and had been A.D.C. to Saïd Pasha. Saïd, who was a well-meaning man, but subject to fits of passion, once lost his temper with Ratib and struck him. Ratib, feeling himself dishonoured by the affront, immediately drew the pistol from his girdle and shot himself in the head. The ball fortunately did not kill him, but he always bore its mark in the shape of a hole just under one of his eyes. Saïd was inconsolable at the result of his hasty action, and ever afterwards showed the greatest favour to poor Ratib. Ali Moubarek was an exceptionally ugly man, but was reputed to have as his wives the four best-looking women in Egypt.

In view of later developments, and of the subsequent attitude of H.M.'s Government, it is interesting to note what appeared to have been their policy and intentions at this period. By the active part they had taken in the appointment of the Commission of Inquiry, and by their special and unusual action in

sanctioning the absence from his office in England of one of their officials and his appointment to the new Egyptian Ministry they had incurred a direct responsibility towards those interested in Egyptian affairs, and had undoubtedly impressed upon the Khedive the idea that that responsibility would be effective, and that the obligations he had entered into could not be disregarded with impunity. Mr. Vivian, on his return to Cairo in December, was instructed by Lord Salisbury to make the following communication to the Khedive: "That H.M.'s Government were watching the new scheme of administrative reform with great interest and that they demanded H.H.'s steady support to the efforts of Nubar Pasha, Mr. Rivers Wilson, and M. de Blignières to restore the financial credit of the country. That H.H. would seriously compromise his own position and that of his dynasty should he act contrary to their demands. That the new order of things was but in its infancy, and that it was rather too early for the strict application of the doctrines of Constitutional Government as understood in Europe, that notwithstanding the fact that H.H. had surrendered his personal power and established a Constitutional Régime, yet he still retained all the prestige and influence of the chief of an Eastern State combined with a very great knowledge and experience of Egypt; and that, taking all this into consideration, H.M.'s Government were determined to hold H.H. responsible for the success of the new *régime*." Similar instructions were sent by the French Government, and I, personally, certainly expected that in the event of complications and difficulties arising, which, indeed, afterwards occurred,

the new Ministry might look for the support of the English and French Governments.

It was obvious that this support of the Governments should be vindicated in the attitude of their official representatives, and that their assistance, and indeed co-operation, would be essential to the success of the new experiment in Egypt. It was also necessary that the two diplomatic representatives should work cordially together. M. Waddington himself assured me that this consideration had particularly occupied his attention. Referring to the somewhat turbulent character of the last French Agent, he said that he was determined to have a man of his own choice, and that he would not allow himself to be influenced "par les bureaux." His selection fell upon M. Godeau, who had just been holding, I believe, a consular position in the Far East, and M. Godeau having no experience in Egyptian matters, he gave him instructions to act in close accordance with the English representative, Mr. Vivian, who had, of course, a thorough knowledge of the whole question. M. Godeau, who was a man of retiring and modest disposition, implicitly carried out the instructions of his Minister.

And now I must advert, and with regret, to a circumstance totally unexpected by me which had a decisive and unfortunate influence on later events. It may have been noticed that during the course of the Commission of Inquiry and all the troubles and anxieties attendant on it, I had invariably received the loyal and useful support of H.M.'s Agent. He entered completely into the spirit of the Commissioners, and was always ready to assist me on the

many occasions when it was necessary to place pressure upon the Khedive, and I felt personally grateful to him for the part he had taken. I have never been able to explain to myself the change of disposition which Mr. Vivian displayed after the institution of the Ministry.

The view he took, which brought him into practical collision with the Ministry, was that in order that the new *régime* should succeed it was essential that it should not only be on good terms with the Viceroy, but that it should consult and work with him in the details of administration. This view, which would at first sight appear to be reasonable enough, did not sufficiently take into consideration the character of the man with whom we had to deal. After much hesitation and opposition the Khedive had been induced to make a declaration in the face of the world, by which he abdicated his position as an arbitrary ruler and accepted that of a constitutional sovereign, governing through and by his ministers. Nubar, however, who was of course better acquainted with the disposition of Ismaïl Pasha than his two foreign colleagues, or even than Mr. Vivian himself, felt from the first that if the pressure which had been imposed upon H.H. were relaxed he would certainly take advantage of it, and would make the situation of the Ministry impossible.

Upon looking back and reflecting calmly, after an interval of many years, on the situation of Mr. Vivian on the one hand and of the Ministry on the other, I think that every allowance must be made for the opinion held by the English Consul-General. At the same time, while admitting his perfect good

faith and his conviction of the correctness of his judgment, I cannot help feeling that, as a servant of the English Government, he was wrong in not subordinating his own views to the necessity of supporting the Ministry in whose success the Government had shown itself so greatly interested. It was not long before the influence of this diversity of opinion began to be felt, and it raised unforeseen difficulties in the work of the new Ministry. According to the wording of the rescript, and of his address to myself, it was understood that the Khedive would hold aloof from all interference in the details of administration, and that he would delegate all executive powers to the Ministers. We acted upon this assumption, and although in constant communication with H.H. each minister conducted the work of his department on more or less independent lines. It had been distinctly laid down, and accepted by the Khedive, that he would not be present at the deliberations of the Council of Ministers, though it was afterwards alleged as an error that we had not invited his presence. He seems to have complained to Mr. Vivian, and with considerable exaggeration, that he was kept "en dehors des affaires," and was not consulted upon matters where his experience and authority would be of supreme utility, and in this Mr. Vivian appears to have agreed with him. The Viceroy soon found out that the Ministry and the English Consul-General were not in accord, and was not slow of availing himself of the opportunity of disparaging the Ministry which he had solemnly promised to support, and of reasserting his curtailed authority.

In the meantime de Blignières and myself, with Nubar, each within his own sphere of action, set to work to improve and to reform, according to the lines laid down by the Commission of Inquiry. One of my first objects was to introduce and carry through a scheme of land settlement, which, while ascertaining and confirming the titles of landholders, would lay the foundation for an equitable adjustment of land revenue ; in other words a cadastral survey, that is survey and settlement with a classification and valuation of lands. Before leaving London I applied to the India Office for the loan of one of their most experienced land settlement officers, to whom I proposed to intrust, with very ample powers, this extremely important work. I was fortunate enough to obtain the services of Mr., afterwards Sir Aukland Colvin, one of their most able revenue officers. On his arrival in Egypt he selected the necessary Staff and lost no time in entering upon his new duties. Quoting from a report of Mr. Colvin's written shortly after the fall of the Ministry : " During the ensuing weeks, with the aid of officers of the Egyptian Army, the measurement of a few villages was made experimentally. Inspectors were selected and sent out into the Provinces with detailed instructions having for their object the collection of agricultural and statistical data. A decree was drafted to give the necessary powers to officers engaged in the survey, and to lay down the principles on which the assessment of land revenue and registration of proprietary rights were to be framed. The work, in a word, was beginning to take shape, when the Ministry suddenly fell. To control the collection

of the provincial revenue the Minister had in view a system of European Inspectors; their object would have been, not to take on themselves the actual work of administration, but to control and assist it. They were to keep the Minister informed of all it concerned him to know, and were placed under the immediate control of the officer charged with the duties of the survey and settlement."

One of the great causes of the misery and oppression of the people was attributable to the irregularity with which the land taxes were collected. It had been the practice of the ruler of the country to collect money according to his necessities, without regarding the ability of the taxpayer to pay at that particular moment. The fellah would, naturally, only have money at his command after he had sold his crops, and the date of collection should be based on that consideration. Under the old system, when the Viceroy was in need of money, collectors were sent through the villages accompanied by so-called bankers, that is to say Greek usurers. If the crop was not yet harvested the unfortunate fellah was unprovided with funds. Compelled to pay by threats of the kourbash, it was generally not till after the application of that instrument of persuasion that he was forced to have recourse to the moneylender, who advanced him the sum demanded on the most outrageous terms of interest, in anticipation of the sale of his crop. One of our earliest and most urgent reforms was to establish the payment of the land revenue at fixed dates corresponding with the harvests. In Upper Egypt the new system was inaugurated at the commencement of the current year.

Instructions were sent out from the Finance Ministry prohibiting in future the use of the kourbash. On grounds of humanity, no doubt this measure became a necessity so soon as European administration was introduced, but it cannot be denied that it rendered the task of collection unusually difficult. At that time a certain Omar Pasha Lufti was Inspector-General of Upper Egypt. According to the official estimates which we had inherited, there were considerable arrears of taxes due from the Upper Provinces, so I sent for the Pasha and asked him to proceed himself to the district and to take steps for recovering the money. He was a man of extremely unprepossessing appearance, and I shall never forget his malignant look when he replied, "You know that there has been severe famine in that part of the country, and that it will be extremely difficult to get the money. At the same time if your Excellency insists I will undertake the mission and bring it back; but I must beg that you make no inquiry into the means which I employ."

The humane intentions of the Government soon became known, and complaints not infrequently reached the Ministry as to the disregard of the new regulations. One day I received representations from a certain village that the tax collector had used excessively harsh measures, and that a Sheikh had been severely beaten owing to his inability to produce the quota of his community. I thought a good effect might be produced by investigating the matter myself, so I summoned both the Sheikh and the collector to meet me at the Ministry. The Sheikh

arrived accompanied by several of his friends, and after stating his case, declared that he had been brutally beaten. I asked the collector what he had to say for himself, and he replied that the whole story was a lie, or that at all events he was not the man who had committed the outrage. Turning to the Sheikh I asked him to prove his case and produce his witnesses. "Witnesses!" he exclaimed, "do you want an angel to descend from heaven? What more witnesses do you want than these!" and he held up for my inspection two enormous and filthy feet, flattened out like pancakes, and bearing very distinct evidence of the treatment they had received. Unfortunately, in spite of this testimony, I couldn't bring home the offence to that particular collector, although I had my strong suspicions that he was the culprit; but I removed him to another province with a strong admonishment as to his future conduct. I hope and believe that under English rule this bad old system of coercion has entirely disappeared.

One of the most essential measures towards the construction of sound financial administration was, naturally, the creation of a proper system of accounts. This work was entrusted to an extremely able official, Mr., afterwards Sir Gerald Fitzgerald, who after a good many years' experience at the War Office and in India had been appointed to the Egyptian service; he was eventually Accountant-General to the Navy. Out of very confused materials he elaborated a clear system which, I believe, with modifications no doubt, forms the basis of the present one, and which out of chaos presented an accurate and simple aspect of

the financial situation. Mr. Fitzgerald's training had been, of course, in English methods, which, being dissimilar from those employed in France, aroused the criticism, and sometimes indeed the ridicule, of my friend M. de Blignières, himself a financial expert of the highest order. He used to call Fitzgerald's accounts *de la Chinoiserie*, but Fitzgerald accepted these gibes with good-humoured equanimity, and there came a time when de Blignières, who was a singularly fair man, became quite converted to the merits of Fitzgerald's system, and acknowledged that without his accounts he would never have been able to understand the position.

As regards larger measures, such as the removal of the burden of excessive taxation from the poor classes, the abolition of a number of small and oppressive taxes which had been specially condemned by the Commission of Inquiry, and other obvious reforms which were under consideration, we had not the time to give effect to them as the Ministry was only in power for about three months.

CHAPTER XVII

FALL OF THE MINISTRY

1879

Reduction of the Army—Attack on Nubar—The Khedive's complicity—Resignation of Nubar—Dismissal of the Ministers—Deposition of Ismaïl—Ismaïl in exile.

THE position of the Ministry was one of great difficulty. The Treasury was empty, for the loan which I had successfully negotiated with Messrs. Rothschild had not yet been realised, and could not be issued until various legal formalities had been overcome. The transfer of the immense properties of the Khedive, in itself a matter of time, was complicated by the existence of numerous mortgages, and Messrs. Rothschild refused to carry out their engagements until an absolutely clean title was assured. In the meantime claims of all sorts were pressed upon the ministry, and urgent remonstrances were made by the Consuls, but there was not even money to pay the officials.

The reduction of the army occupied a prominent place among the various economies which pressed for early recognition. The number of soldiers allowed by the firmans of the Sultan was 18,000, but looking to the political position of Egypt this full quota was too large, and too small. 18,000 troops

was manifestly insufficient for the defence of the country, and as Egypt was virtually under the moral protection of the Powers, it was not conceivable that she would ever be called upon to take measures for self-defence. Indeed these considerations had led to the abolition of her navy. On the other hand such a force was far too large for police purposes in so small and orderly a country. The Ministry therefore determined, wisely, I think, to reduce the army from 15,000, which I believe it then numbered, to 7,000. While this measure was hailed with satisfaction by the rank and file, delighted to be relieved of their compulsory service and allowed to return to their villages, its effect was very different in the case of several hundred officers, whose services were dispensed with, and to whom considerable arrears of pay were due. In ordinary times these circumstances might have had no untoward result. The Khedive was all powerful and knew how to deal with complaints, whether just or unjust. But it was different now, and the officers found an ally in Ismaïl, who was already showing signs of dissatisfaction with the proceedings of his Ministers. Certainly with his tacit consent, if not, as I think was actually the case, with his active collusion, this band of officers became a formidable factor to be reckoned with, and it was this military movement which was the immediate cause of the eventual downfall of the Ministry.

It was at this critical moment that the Khedive discovered that the Ministry not only did not receive from the English and French Consuls-General the sympathy and support which was naturally to be expected, but that Mr. Vivian, who took the leading

part, openly condemned its policy. H.H., who by this time thoroughly repented the concessions he had made, and who had never been sincere in making them, was not slow to take advantage of the opportunity of regaining some of his lost authority. The band of greedy adventurers who surrounded him saw the chance of recovering their influence, and the old reactionary party—whose interests had been threatened by the proposed reforms, such as the abolition of the corvée, and the establishment of the land survey—took courage and assumed an actively hostile attitude towards the Ministry. We could, however, have met and overcome all these troubles, had we been able to present a united front with our diplomatic representatives, and above all had the money from the recent loan been at our disposal. It is true that Messrs. Rothschild, with their usual liberality, made me an advance of £400,000, but this was insufficient to cope with the urgency of the case.

The Khedive soon saw that the moment for action had arrived, and the blow was struck. On the morning of the 18th February, 1879, he summoned me to Abdin Palace and retained me in conversation a considerable time. At length I excused myself and took my leave, and proceeded to the Finance Ministry which was at no great distance. As I emerged from a side road into the avenue which led to the Ministry I noticed, about two hundred yards off, a group of officers surrounding the carriage of Nubar Pasha, and evidently threatening or attacking him. I turned my carriage and galloping as quickly as possible to the spot, leapt into the carriage of Nubar

and threw my arm round him just as one of the officers had raised his sword to strike him. Although the men maintained their threatening attitude, and I received a few blows, the unexpected appearance of a European disconcerted them, and prevented them from proceeding to extremities. We were, nevertheless, forced out of the carriage and surrounded by our assailants, who hustled and insulted us as we went along. I took Nubar's arm and we proceeded on foot to the Ministry, where the doors were closed immediately after our entry. We remained practically in a state of siege for two or three hours.

The news of the outrage spread through Cairo, and as soon as it reached my wife she drove rapidly to the Ministry. She was roughly repulsed by some of the soldiers, but she courageously forced her way through the crowd and managed to rejoin me, not unfortunately without having received a severe blow on the arm, the effects of which she suffered from long afterwards. At last the Khedive appeared upon the scene with several of the foreign Consuls and Ministers, and his own bodyguard of soldiers. The building was still surrounded by the discontented officers, who were in a state of tumult and shouting for their pay, but they readily made way for H.H. to pass. He came up to my room and entered it with his hand outstretched to me, but I refused to take it, as I felt very little doubt that the attack on Nubar had been concocted either by him or with his approval. H.H. said, "I will go and speak to them myself," so we all descended the grand staircase and found ourselves face to face with a military mob. The Viceroy, standing on the steps, then addressed them

in very authoritative and energetic language, which appeared to calm the excited spirits, until suddenly one of the officers rushed out of the crowd, and seizing H.H. by his coat poured out a stream of violent language. The Khedive's countenance changed perceptibly, and he gave an order to his bodyguard, who fired a few shots without injuring any one. The mob dispersed, and the whole affair was concluded. I remember Nubar saying afterwards, " Quand j'ai vus Wilson tout a coup paraître à mon côté, c'était comme un ange qui tombait du ciel."

As regards the attack on myself I may mention that on the 25th February Prince Hassan, as Commander-in-Chief of the army, attended in full uniform at the British Residency, and in the presence of Mr. Vivian and his Staff and certain representatives of the English Community, formally expressed to me on behalf of the Khedive and of the Egyptian army, his apology and regret for the outrage that had been perpetrated. I have always understood that one of the officers who attacked us was the notorious Arabi Pasha.

Considerable agitation still reigned in the city, and the English and French Consuls-General waited upon the Khedive to demand assurances from him that he would be able to establish and maintain order. Ismaïl saw his chance, and replied that he could do so if Nubar Pasha, whose unpopularity was supposed to be the cause of what had happened, would retire from the Ministry. In saying this he was well aware of the unfriendly feeling of Mr. Vivian towards Nubar. Mr. Vivian personally communicated to us this demand, and Nubar finding he was

unsupported by the Consuls had no alternative but to hand in his resignation, in spite of the remonstrances of M. de Blignières and myself. This was the first step towards the accomplishment of the Khedive's object. He discredited the Ministry by depriving it of its most powerful element, and he unfortunately discovered that the Foreign Governments were not prepared to insist upon Nubar's restoration, as they could not do otherwise than accept the advice of their agents, who, rightly or wrongly, believed in H.H.'s assertion that the retirement of Nubar was an absolute necessity. It is true that when Ismaïl suggested that he himself should preside over the Council of Ministers the Governments refused to accede to the proposition, but as a compromise the Prince Héritier Tewfik was appointed, the Khedive agreeing, under pressure, that the two European Ministers should have a veto upon all the proceedings of his Government. He also made a formal declaration that he would still remain bound by the decree of the 28th August, 1878. Of course the appointment of Prince Tewfik in succession to Nubar was a mere farce, and the position of De Blignières and myself now became very precarious—as we felt that the Khedive would not be satisfied until he had got rid of us.

During this time the Commission of Inquiry, which had resumed its sittings, was carefully elaborating a scheme for a complete financial settlement. I was not able to take an active part in the work, which was continued by the four Commissioners of Public Debt. A very able report was drawn up by

Major Baring, which involved necessarily certain sacrifices on the part of the public creditors. De Blignières and I heartily accepted these proposals, but we felt it our duty, before the report was finally adopted and signed, to communicate it to the Khedive on the distinct understanding and promise that its contents should be treated as strictly confidential.

The Khedive now brought off his last coup. He hastily called together a number of functionaries, notables, and ulemas, showed them our draft report, and ordered them to prepare a counter scheme—though he pretended afterwards that this was a spontaneous movement in deference to public opinion which was hostile to the Foreign Ministry. De Blignières and I then asked for a personal interview, in which we protested formally against his conduct. He received our remarks with outward courtesy, but offered no explanation of his breach of faith. He had burnt his boats. He then addressed a letter to Chérif Pasha, desiring him to form a new cabinet, consisting entirely of natives, and announced what he had done to his Foreign Ministers, without even going through the form of asking for their resignation.

The following is his letter to me :—

"Mon cher Monsieur Wilson,

"En présence des adresses qui m'ont été remises par les représentants les plus autorisés du pays, et de l'agitation qui se produisait de toutes parts, J'ai dû confier à S. Ex. Chérif Pacha la mission de constituer un nouveau Cabinet composé d'éléments veritablement Egyptiens et répondant aux aspirations nationales.

"Au moment où vous allez quitter les fonctions de

Ministre des Finances, que Je vous avais confiées Je tiens à vous assurer de nouveau de mes sentiments de haute estime et d'amitié.

"ISMAÏL.

"Du Palais d'Abdin,
"*le* 8 *Avril*, 1879."

On the 10th of April the Commission of Inquiry addressed a dignified letter to the Khedive placing their resignation in his hands, and laying before him officially the report they had prepared. He declared that he could not accept its conclusions inasmuch as they involved the bankruptcy of his country, and he issued in its place the decree which he had had prepared by the notables and ulemas. So ended this interesting ministerial experiment from which so much had been expected.

The causes of this consummation are sufficiently apparent from what I have written—the main feature being the indecision and inconsistency of H.M. Government, which culminated, I may say, in March, in the extraordinary declaration in Parliament of Sir Stafford Northcote, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in which he said that I was merely a functionary of the Khedive, to whom it was open to dismiss me at any moment. Technically this may have been the case, but 'toute vérité n'est pas bonne à dire,' the news was telegraphed to Cairo, where its effect was instantaneous, and from that moment our fate was sealed.

The publication of the financial decree of the ulemas, which the Viceroy substituted for that made by the Commission of Inquiry, brought protests from the English and French Governments, but these

did not take an effective form until stronger and more formal protests had been made by Germany, and afterwards by Austria. On June 18th the English and French representatives officially recommended the Khedive to abdicate, and a similar recommendation was made on June 23rd by Austria and Germany. Ismaïl appealed ineffectually to the Sultan, with whom the Powers had been in communication, and on June 26th he was deposed, and his son Tewfik was named in his place. This announcement was received by Ismaïl in the first instance with consternation, but he soon recovered his equanimity, and he departed from Alexandria two days afterwards in his beautiful yacht the *Marowsah*, with dignity and resignation. It was supposed that he carried away a large treasure, but I believe this was far from being the case. Harsh and oppressive as his rule may have been, there is no doubt that his disappearance was regretted by many people in Egypt. He was Effendina, the Great Lord, and had he returned at any time his resumption of authority would have been willingly acquiesced in. The natives could easily understand, and would more readily accept the rude autocracy of a despot, than the benefits conferred upon them by an alien administration, and Gibbon wrote with entire truth : " the character of the Egyptian native ; insensible to kindness but extremely susceptible to fear."

When I next saw Ismaïl Pasha he was an exile from Egypt, to which he never returned. Clever as he undoubtedly was, he had totally misapprehended the elements with which he had to deal. With his imperfect knowledge and information, he attached

undue importance to the declaration in Parliament of the English Government, and, above all, as he frequently said to me afterwards, to the attitude of H.M.'s representative in Egypt. I constantly met him in Paris and London, and it was really remarkable to see how he bore his misfortunes. He often talked over the past with me, and never spoke ill of any of those who had brought about his downfall, with the exception of the one person who had deceived him. On the other hand, he met with much ingratitude from those whom he had benefited, of which the following is only one among many instances. He told me that two or three days before his fate was trembling in the balance he asked one of his entourage called —— to take a drive with him. Suddenly, as they were going along, —— fell upon his knees in the carriage, and entreated the Khedive to grant him a request. "Certainly," said Ismaïl, "what is it?" "It is this, that if your Highness is obliged to leave Egypt, you will allow me to accompany you." The Khedive was much touched by this mark of devotion, and accordingly when the firman which deposed him arrived from the Sultan, he sent for his follower to come to him at once. An answer was brought back that —— was ill, and he remained ill until the Khedive had left Egypt.

I must also add that Ismaïl Pasha was a man of a kindly nature—affectionate to his family, generous, in fact too much so—and very pleasant in general society.

Ismail

CHAPTER XVIII

GORDON PASHA

Correspondence with Gordon—Baker Pasha—Gordon's resignation—The Relief Expedition.

When I was presiding over the Commission of Inquiry in 1878 I had some correspondence with Gordon Pasha, who was then Governor-General of the Soudan. After receiving the preliminary report of the Commission he wrote me the following interesting letter. It will have been already gathered from the previous chapters that his view that Mr. Vivian and I were too hard on the Khedive was not justified by after events.

"Kartoum, 14*th Nov.*, 1878.

"My dear Mr. Rivers Wilson,

"I have received the report of the Comn. d'enquête and read it carefully. I am glad to say that scarcely any of the abuses you have printed as existing in the Cairo Govt. exist in the Soudan. There are two exceptions, viz.: the taking of the Govt. of the possessions of deceased people and the using of these means for the Govt. purposes, thereby causing debts to spring up towards the heirs and much delay. I had put a stop to this before I saw the report, and shall see to it closer now: the other is the taking of one day per month from each clerk or employé by order 5th April, 1875. This I shall study and do away with if I think fit. It is remarkable that the disorders you point out have never existed in the Soudan,

and the few that did I have removed, such as taxing date trees before they can bear, taxing land which has been swallowed up by sand, or washed away by the river, etc. With respect to the gathering of taxes, the people have the best of it, for in this vast country they can easily escape the tax-gatherer, and our arrears are very great. It is no use mincing the matter, you must coerce the people to make them pay. I have tried the quiet means and it is no good. I hope you will get from H.H. the *whole* of the papers I sent him. These were the Budgets of each Mudirat, the Revenue Returns, the list of taxes, the Roll of the troops, the Debts due *by* the Government, and I will send the Debts due *to* the Govt. of which I shall never realise more than the moiety. I must say the tone of the report is very unnecessarily caustic on H.H. The same result might have been attained with gentler means. Did not Cave, Goschen, and you all, know what H.H. was, *an Arab* with a varnish of education on him. I see no good ever in being hard on the Arabs. They are brought up in a certain sphere and follow that line. The question is how to lead them into another. If I was to be as hard up here as you have been on H.H. I never could get on. If I can get them to follow my views and obey me I am content without showing up the poor devils' sins. Vivian is just the same . . . he will have his pound of flesh. I only hope in a future world we English may not be judged after this hard cruel rule.

"Believe me,

"Yours sincerely,

"C. G. Gordon."

I had various dealings with Gordon while I was at the Finance Ministry. His Government was supposed to form an integral part of the administration of Egypt, and as such was responsible for certain contributions to the Central Treasury. Not receiving

any portion of the amount thus estimated to be due, I telegraphed to Gordon asking him to make me a remittance. My demands were met with the utmost indignation and a refusal from Gordon. His attitude then was anything but friendly, and I cannot refrain from publishing a very characteristic letter he sent me in answer to some request for information—the subject of which I do not recollect. I did not know him personally, but we met later and became great friends, and he apologised for the rude messages which he was in the habit of sending me from Khartoum.

"À Monsieur le Ministre
"des Finances, Caire,

"Kartoum, 9 *Mars*, 1879.

"MONSIEUR LE MINISTRE,

"J'ai reçu votre lettre No. 1002, 8 Fevrier, 1879, me priant 'de *vous* renseigner sur une affaire qui regarde un officier Egyptien *le plus tôt possible*.' Je vous prie Monsieur le Ministre des Finances, de m'informer, depuis quand Son Altesse le Khédive d'Egypte vous a confié l'administration de ses troupes, pour que vous pouvez m'adresser une pareille lettre. J'ai en l'idée que vous étiez le Ministre des Finances, et pas autre chose, mais peutêtre vous avez si bien réussi dans votre finance que Son Altesse le Khedive vous a confié l'administration de son Armée : mais jusqu 'au moment que j'ai l'avis officiel de cette nomination, je ne puis pas l'accepter.

"Veuillez agréer, Monsieur le Ministre l'assurance de ma consideration distinguée.

"C. G. GORDON."

As anything connected with Gordon is of interest, I might here recall a conversation I had respecting him with Chérif Pasha when I was in Cairo in 1876.

Gordon had lately taken up the position of Governor-General of the Soudan in succession to Sir Samuel Baker. He had been appointed with much higher powers than those of his predecessor, being, indeed, supreme ruler of the enormous territory comprised in the equatorial provinces of Egypt known as the Soudan. Chérif told me that he was commissioned by the Viceroy to arrange personally with Gordon the terms of his engagement, and that he asked him what he would consider a suitable remuneration for his services. Gordon replied that whatever H.H. thought proper would be acceptable to him, and though Chérif insisted that he should name a salary, he absolutely refused to do so. At last Chérif said with some hesitation, as he thought the remuneration might be considered inadequate in view of Gordon's exalted position, "Would it be agreeable to you to receive the same amount as Baker Pasha, £10,000 a year and all expenses paid?" "Good gracious!" said Gordon, "I couldn't think of accepting anything like that. Would H.H. consider £2000 a year suitable? So far as I am concerned, £1000 would be ample; but I should be glad to be able to make some provision for my family." In telling me this Chérif did not appear to be struck by the self-denial of Gordon, but rather, was amazed at his refusal to accept so good an offer.

I once travelled from Alexandria with an Italian bishop who was on his way from Khartoum to Rome. I talked to him about Gordon, supposing that there could be little in common between a man of Gordon's somewhat narrow evangelical views and a Roman Catholic prelate, but the bishop expressed the greatest

admiration for him. I asked if he could account for the cause of Gordon's extraordinary influence over the natives of Africa. To my surprise he replied simply: "His chastity." The possession of this quality, which was absolutely incomprehensible to the Arab, seemed to raise him to the position of a mystical and almost divine character.

One last recollection of Gordon. After three years of arduous but most successful work in the Soudan, finding himself in conflict with the Khedive and unsupported by H.M.'s Government, he resigned his post and returned to England exhausted and discouraged. I was in Paris just after he had passed through, and Lord Lyons told me of a visit he had received from him. He described Gordon as being in a state of great excitement, and said he complained bitterly of the indifference of the English Government, and of his apprehension that the good work he had done would fall to pieces—he had virtually destroyed the slave trade and had left all that vast country in a state of peace.—Gordon said that in order to prevent this he intended to go to the French Government, as the English Government did not care, and to ask them to take steps to have a French Governor-General appointed in his stead. "That I forbid you to do," exclaimed Lord Lyons, usually the most tranquil of men. Gordon replied that it was his duty to obey his lordship, but that he should write a despatch which he begged Lord Lyons to forward to the Foreign Office. This despatch has, I believe, been published, and I well remember the last sentence—"Anyhow it matters little, a few years hence a piece of ground six feet by two will

contain all that remains of ambassadors, ministers, and your obedient humble servant, C. G. GORDON."

A few days afterwards I returned to London and received a message that Lord Salisbury wished to see me. When I presented myself to him he said at once, "What can you tell me about Gordon?" Remembering what I had just heard in Paris and knowing my Foreign Office friends, I said, "I am sure they have told you that Gordon is mad"; at which Lord Salisbury smiled and I saw that I was right. "Well," I continued, "I should never recommend your lordship to send Gordon on a delicate diplomatic mission to Paris, or Vienna, or Berlin: but if you want some out-of-the-way piece of work to be done in an unknown and barbarous country, Gordon would be your man. If you told him to capture Cetewayo, for instance, he would get to Africa, mount on a pony with a stick in his hand, and ask the nearest way to Cetewayo's kraal, and when he got there he would sit down and have a talk with him!"

I have always thought that Gordon might have been saved, and Khartoum would not have fallen, had the desert route from Suakin to Berber been taken by the relief expedition. It was strongly advocated by my uncle, General Sir Frederick Stephenson, who was Commander-in-Chief in Egypt at the time and thoroughly conversant with all the reasons for and against it. The chief difficulty was the scarcity of water, as there were only a few wells of bad water scattered throughout the distance of 250 miles, and for 105 miles there were no wells at all. However, the long route from Cairo to Khartoum

up the Nile was chosen by the authorities in London, and months were spent in expensive preparations. Canadian boatmen were brought over to manage the small boats, engines and trucks for the railway were sent from the Cape, and steamers came out piecemeal from England. Sir Frederick Stephenson was, most unfairly as I thought, put on one side, and Lord Wolseley was sent out to command the expedition, but, as everybody knows, it arrived at Khartoum too late.

CHAPTER XIX

RECOLLECTIONS OF CAIRO

Ismaïl's lavish expenditure—Saïd Pasha—Maison des Marmitons—Society—Wilfred Blount—My last visit.

With the disappearance of Ismaïl Pasha the autocracy of the ruler was at an end, and a complete change took place in the political, and I may add, even in the social, condition of Egypt. Only those who were acquainted with Egypt in those days can realise the supreme and absolute power exercised by the Khedive. The whole fabric and machinery which had been established to throw dust in the eyes of Europe was a mere sham and illusion, used to tranquillise the creditors and to obtain financial assistance. There has probably never been a case of such unbridled extravagance by an individual, with such unbounded resources to enable him to gratify it. His uncle and predecessor, Saïd Pasha, who was a witty, and to some extent, a wise man, is reported to have said, "It has been the problem of ages for the rulers of Egypt to ruin this country by misgovernment, yet such are its natural advantages that they have never succeeded. But there is a man alive who some day will solve that problem, and that is my nephew Ismaïl."

I was a witness of the last days of Ismaïl's splendour, but already from sheer necessity he had

begun to economise. In earlier times he seemed to consider that his resources were inexhaustible, and the whole of Europe was astounded at the lavish expenditure incurred at the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. Representatives of all the governments, and of most of the reigning families of Europe, prominent among whom was the Empress Eugénie, were entertained with truly Oriental splendour, all expenses being defrayed by the Khedive. I remember Blum Pasha telling me that before I came to Egypt backsheesh of £50,000 were of daily occurrence and everything was done on the same scale. It was not unusual for the Viceroy to give an order to one of his favourites to furnish one of the many palaces which were built during his reign. That individual would order from Paris quantities of chandeliers, expensive carpets, and silk curtains, for the decoration of the building, and would be able to secure for himself exorbitant profits. Mr. Larking used to tell an amusing story of Saïd Pasha, whose ways were somewhat similar. Saïd was visiting England and was living on board his yacht in the Thames, near Woolwich. One day, as he was about to sit down to dinner with a large company, a servant announced that a person urgently requested an interview with him. "Who is he, and what does he want?" said Saïd. "He wants to sell Your Highness some diving bells." "Diving bells! what do I want with diving bells? Tell him to go to the devil!" but as the servant was leaving he called him back saying, "Stop—I will have a diving bell; it may be useful to fish up those horses of my friend —— which always have to be thrown overboard in the Bay of Biscay!" The fact

being that —— used to receive an order from the Viceroy to buy, say, twenty horses in England, but somehow or other only ten would arrive, the others having generally been lost in a storm on the voyage to Egypt! Saïd Pasha, who was no fool, was well aware of the methods of his entourage.

Cairo was an extremely pleasant residence for Europeans in those days, but the social circle was a much more restricted one. The greater portion of the Ismaïlia quarter was still unbuilt upon, and there were hardly any European residences on the other side of the Nile where so many beautiful villas now surround the Palace of Ghezireh. The Shoubra road, which was often called the "Rotten Row" of Cairo, was the fashionable resort of Europeans who thronged it every afternoon on horseback and in carriages, while the equipages of many of the Pashas, and the carriages of the Khedivial ladies, escorted by mounted eunuchs, helped to form a very gay and animated scene. I am told that the Shoubra road has now been deserted for the drive round the island of Ghizeh on the other side of the Nile. The Khedive wished to encourage Europeans to settle, or to build houses which would bring them there for the winter season, and gave tracts of land to certain favoured individuals for that purpose.

In the best quarter of the European portion of Cairo there was a handsome building with a large garden attached to it, which was popularly known as the "Maison des Marmitons"; it had, indeed, been bought by the joint contributions of the kitchen staff of the Palace. The Khedive, hearing of this, sent for the chief of the marmitons and asked how it had

been possible for them to commit such an extravagance out of their savings? The man thus interrogated replied that they had been able to acquire the property for a very low sum of money (which he named) so they had invested their savings in it. "Well," said his master, "I don't approve of my marmitons holding house property so I will take it off your hands at the price you gave for it." It is scarcely necessary to say that the unfortunate scullion had named a sum infinitely less than that which had really been paid for the property, and the Khedive, who was well aware of the fact, made a considerable profit by the transaction.

One of the most remarkable houses was erected by my friend St. Maurice, an accomplished and delightful Frenchman who had been connected with the Court of the Emperor, and was a great favourite with the Viceroy who had made him Master of the Horse. It was entirely Oriental in character, and decorated with beautiful ceilings and other woodwork collected from old Cairene houses and mosques. St. Maurice afterwards sold some of his collection to the South Kensington Museum, where it is now to be seen. The house was bought some years later by the French Government, and is at the present day the residence of the French Consul-General.

Another member of the French Community was the Duchesse de Persigny, who after the death of the Duc had married M. Lemoine, a French lawyer practising in Cairo and Alexandria. It was an unfortunate alliance, and Mme de Persigny led an unhappy life in Cairo in very poor circumstances. She loved to talk about the bygone days when as

ambassadress to the Court of St. James' she played so brilliant a part in the society of London. She keenly felt her changed position, and I saw a letter she wrote to a friend of mine in which she signed her name "Aglaï, Princesse de la Moskowa, Duchesse de Persigny, femme Lemoine."

One of the most interesting Englishmen in Egypt was Mr. Wilfred Blount, who lived like an Arab Sheikh in tents in the desert. He and his wife Lady Anne, a granddaughter of Byron, used occasionally to ride into Cairo on camels picturesquely attired as Bedouins, this dress being particularly becoming to Mr. Blount who was a strikingly handsome figure. It was while living in the desert that he gradually acquired his stud of thoroughbred Arab horses, which he afterwards imported to England, and which have done so much to improve the breed of horses here. I knew Mr. Blount very well, and through him I procured a beautiful pair of white Arab ponies, which I had for many years in London and with which I won prizes at the shows. I insert the following letter as it describes one of Mr. Blount's expeditions with his wife through country which was not often visited in those days.

"Bagdad, *March* 18*th*, 1879.

"My dear Rivers,

"I am sure you will be glad to hear that we have come into port at last. We have had a long voyage of it, eighty days from Damascus, and have seen much and endured much. When we got to Jôp we found it quite possible to go on to Hayel and so went there, crossing the Nefud at the same point as Palgrave did. His description is much exaggerated, as the whole of the Nefud is covered

with good camel pasture, and the sand does not drift about as he would have you suppose. Only there is no water for about 100 miles and you can't go fast. Jebel Shammar is really a charming place, beautiful granite hills rising out of the desert. Haïl (or Hayel) is an oasis with palm gardens irrigated from wells, but there is nothing in the way of fields in Nejed as we understand them in the north. The Emir Mohammed ibn Rashid (Jellal's youngest brother) received us with all honours and we made great friends with him and his cousin Hamoud. He has killed a number of his relations and has a rather bad character there, but he was very polite to us. Haïl is a civilised town, far cleaner and more orderly than any town I have seen in Turkey. No street dogs or thieves and everybody very quiet and well behaved. The walls and houses look very new after Turkey, as they are kept in good repair. The desert outside is perfectly safe for travellers. Robbery is quite unknown for several hundred miles round. Don't let anybody persuade you that the Arabs are incapable of self-government. I am ready to show Jebel Shammar against any province in Turkey for security to life and property and general contentment of inhabitants. Only they know nothing of European notions. We saw the Emir's horses which have the reputation of being the finest collection in Arabia, for Ibn Saoud's is broken up. We came back from Hayel with the Persian haj, which happened to be on its way back from Mecca, and so were driven out of our intended course, to Bagdad instead of Bussora. We are now going on to Persia and India. . . . I did not forget your commission about buying an Arab horse, but in Nejed I had no opportunity. Here I have bought one I think you would like. I have given £70 for him. . . . Write to me, please, at Simla where we hope to be about the middle of May. . . . Take care of yourself and don't let the Khedive get the better of you.

"W. S. B."

When I revisited Cairo in 1901 I found the Ismaïlia quarter transformed into a fine collection of residences, with admirable roads, electric light, and all the attributes of a European city. I could not help contrasting the aspect of this quarter with that of the old Native City of Cairo, where, so far as I could judge, not a single improvement had been introduced. I seemed to recognise the same dilapidated buildings, the same old dustheaps which I remembered twenty-one years before, and I thought that the English administration had hardly dealt equitably between the Native and the European quarters of the city. Another thing also struck me forcibly, and that was the want of sympathy and the almost complete social separation between the Europeans and the Egyptians; it was evident that a policy of conciliation was not encouraged by the ruling powers. The improvement, however, in the country districts was strikingly apparent in every direction. In contrast to my first recollections of Egypt hardly a sign of poverty was to be observed, and the appearance of prosperity and contentment among the Fellaheen was a signal evidence of the advantages derived from the British Administration.

CHAPTER XX

COMMISSION OF LIQUIDATION

1880

My views on the Government of Egypt—Administrative reform—European representation—Restriction of Consular interference—Success of International Ministry—Nubar's character—Other Native statesmen—Appointment of Commission—Law of Liquidation—Termination of my official connection with Egypt.

After the fall of the Ministry in April, 1879, I returned to London and resumed my work at the National Debt Office. During the discussions which were taking place pending the deposition of Ismaïl Pasha, in which I was called upon to take a part, I wrote to Sir Stafford Northcote the following letter, which explains my views on the situation :—

25th June, 1879.

Dear Sir Stafford Northcote,

With reference to an observation which you made yesterday as to the difficulties which might be expected to attend the establishment of a government under a new Khedive, and especially as to that of finding honest Native Ministers, I shall feel obliged if you will allow me to offer a few remarks, founded on my personal experience of Egypt.

It appears to be assumed that the experiment of Nubar Pasha's Ministry was a failure, and that its

repetition is to be avoided; but before accepting such a conclusion it should be considered what were the conditions under which it existed, how far those conditions were responsible for the failure, and whether under altered conditions the arrangement would not work well, and be, indeed, the best that could be devised. Nubar Pasha insisted on the presence of an English colleague in his Ministry, partly as a support and protection to himself, and partly because he was conscious that the work of financial reform would never be carried out in the hands of a native. He accepted under pressure a French colleague as Minister of Public Works, but subsequently congratulated himself on having been compelled to accept the services of M. de Blignières.

That the administrative reforms which M. de Blignières and I contemplated and inaugurated in many cases, would ever be effected by Egyptian Ministers is not to be imagined, though these reforms are essential to the maintenance of the country in a prosperous and solvent condition. It has been suggested that European "aide ministres" should be appointed under a cabinet of Natives. Europeans placed in such a position would never be able to act with the freedom and authority necessary for enabling them to contend against the obstructiveness of the Native officials. Take the case of the cadastre, an absolutely essential work, I should have carried it through by the force of the authority I possessed as Minister had I remained in office. In the hands of any subordinate it would never be effected, and the Native Ministers, even if willing to promote the work, would be influenced to resistance by the pressure put

upon them by the Pashas, whose interest it is to prevent a land settlement being made on an equitable basis. A pretence was made to continue the cadastre after my retirement, but while prosecuting the survey of lands, the new Government directed that the valuation should be abandoned.

To take another instance. It would require an exercise of undisputed authority to reform the involved system of accounts, which is responsible for so much of the present disorder. This I had taken in hand, and with the valuable assistance of Mr. Fitzgerald, would have carried out. As an illustration of what is to be expected from a Native Minister Mr. Gaillard, the head of the Post Office, has introduced an improved account system in his department by which, while establishing a perfect check, unknown before, he reduced his account branch from 47 to 3 officials. Within the last few days Ragheb Pasha, the Finance Minister, reputed one of the most capable and honest of the Pashas, has peremptorily ordered him to revert to the old system.

In like manner M. de Blignières was able during his short tenure of office to pass a law regulating the Corvée, and abolishing the labour privileges possessed and abused by the great proprietors. Only the firm hand of a European Minister, possessing the influence and authority belonging to such a position, could prevent a return to the old system.

I assume, then, that for a few years at least it would be extremely desirable that the supreme direction of Finance and Public Works should be placed in the hands of Europeans. Ultimately, when a new system has been brought into operation and Native

administrative ability and honesty have developed themselves, as I am satisfied would be the case, the Europeans might retire and leave Egypt to be governed by the Egyptians. It is objected that in a Mussulman country, independent of European rule, the imposition of European Ministers would shock the national sentiment, and might give rise to disturbances. This objection does not apply to the five million native population of Egypt, who will gratefully accept the boon of good government, from whatever hands it may come to them. I had ample proofs in the early period of our Ministry of the ease with which the confidence of the native population could be won over to a European Minister. There remains the small Turkish dominant Party whose strength and importance have been ridiculously magnified of late. The members of this Party simply obey in a slavish way the will of the Ruler of the country. It was the will of the present Khedive that the European Ministers should be thwarted and opposed, and so we were in constant conflict with these men. As soon as the Ruler finds that it is for his interest that his European advisers should have fair play, or that he is compelled to support them, there will be nothing to fear from the Pashas.

The religious feeling need not be counted with. I have, at an early period, often heard the Khedive boast of the utter absence of fanaticism in Egypt, and he spoke truly. Of late, as part of the comedy he has played, a ridiculous demonstration was got up of ulemas and religious Sheikhs, at the head of which figured the Sheikh of Bekri—the chief of the unorthodox sects—but it is notorious that the whole

thing was a farce, invented and encouraged by the Viceroy. It is not in this quarter that the European Ministers need fear opposition. Of course if the Khedive gave the hint, obstruction and opposition would arise from all sides, but if Prince Tewfik succeeds his father, there is no fear that he will play the game of Ismaïl Pasha, and were he so inclined moral coercion could effectively be applied which unfortunately was wanting in the case of the present Khedive. Had the English and French Consuls-General supported Nubar's Ministry with intelligence and discretion, the Viceroy would never have attempted to emancipate himself from the control which was imposed upon him and which he accepted at a time when the English Consul-General was acting in union with the Commission of Inquiry.

And here comes the real and only difficulty. If the Consuls, either not appreciating the altered circumstances of the country, or over-anxious to assert their personal position, attempt to mix themselves as in olden days with matters of Government and administration, a collision will be likely to ensue between these functionaries and the responsible ministers, which will weaken the latter, and place a weapon against them in the hands of the malcontents of the Turkish Party, if not of the Viceroy himself. This was the rock on which Nubar's Ministry was shipwrecked. Instead of standing aside and watching with friendly interest the efforts of the new Ministry, ready on a hint from the European members to lend them their support, the English and French diplomatic agents initiated proposals at variance with the views of the Ministry,

and eventually made themselves the organs of a systematic opposition in which they were gladly joined by the Khedive, who saw, in the disunion of the Europeans, a chance of upsetting the new order of things, and regaining his power and perhaps even his estates.

If for reasons of policy it is thought desirable that the Foreign Consuls should continue to exercise an interference in the Government of Egypt, then I would not advocate the appointment of European Ministers, but if this principle, the incorrectness of which was recognised by the establishment of the International Tribunals, is abandoned, and the Consuls are confined to the limits of action exercised by diplomatic agents in constitutional countries, I am convinced that, as a temporary measure, the presence and authority of European Ministers offer the best security for the establishment of the necessary administrative reforms.

I should like to say one word on the practical working of an International Ministry, and as to its effect on the relative influence in Egypt of England and France—the two European countries represented in Nubar's Ministry. The result of our co-operation proves at least, that government under such circumstances is practicable. We worked together with complete harmony and mutual confidence, and I am satisfied, and my late colleagues will confirm my assertion, that our union was likely to become, if possible, even more complete in the future. Finance, however, in Egypt, covers so large an area of administration, and is so pre-eminently the most important branch of government, that the occupant

of the Finance Ministry must necessarily fill the largest space in the eyes of the population, and exercise a far wider influence than any other of his colleagues.

I, in common with M. de Blignières and Nubar and Riaz Pashas, am persuaded that had we been left undisturbed for another six months we should have obtained a hold on the country which would have made us independent of the intrigues even of the Khedive. As a necessary consequence English influence would be largely increased and firmly established in a far greater proportion than French influence, which would be effected in a much less degree by the operations of the Minister of Public Works. I only allude to this because it has sometimes been thought that inconvenience might arise from a supposed sharing of influence and prestige between the two countries in Egypt.

As regards the selection of Native Ministers, I can only say that the country cannot produce better men than Nubar, Riaz and Moubarek, and I feel bound to say that justice has not been done to these courageous and public-spirited men, who jeopardized their lives and property in their patriotic efforts to work out the problem of a Reformed Administration in Egypt. Nubar, I know, has many enemies. He has faults, but he has splendid qualities, and in this country at least he is entitled to respect and even gratitude. He has done three considerable things which brought much odium on him, but which were all in accordance with English policy or English interests.

He forced the Suez Canal Company to surrender so much of their original concessions as entitled them

to all lands reclaimed by the irrigation of the Sweet Water Canal, thereby enabling them to establish French colonies in the heart of the Delta. They are now restricted to the simple navigation of the Maritime Canal from sea to sea, and one of the chief political dangers anticipated by Lord Palmerston was thus removed, though at a heavy cost to the Egyptian Exchequer.

By the ability and perseverance of Nubar the International Tribunals were established with the cordial goodwill of England, but in spite of the obstinate resistance of France.

Finally, when recalled to power last year he voluntarily offered to an Englishman the most influential post in his Ministry, and only accepted under pressure, and almost under protest, a French Minister in a subordinate situation.

Nubar is said to be ambitious and he deserves the character, but not as a reproach. He is ambitious to lead Egypt to govern herself according to sound principles which shall secure prosperity for her and enable her to dispense with foreign interference. He knew that Ismaïl Pasha was the great obstacle in the way of such a result, and this is the cause of his notorious hostility to the Khedive, but knowing Nubar intimately as I do, I declare that his ambition does not go beyond an intense wish to do good to Egypt, and an honourable desire to employ his great abilities in the emancipation of his country. It is said he is unpopular in Egypt. With the small band of half-caste Pashas—yes; with the native population —no. The cause is not far to seek, but even were it otherwise, Egypt is not governed by popularity,

and certainly no Minister in Egypt was ever more powerful or more detested than the Moufettish. As Minister to a docile well-intentioned man like Prince Tewfik, Nubar would for the first time have free scope to apply the principles of government which he has elaborated with special reference to the conditions of Egypt; and he is the one and only Egyptian statesman capable of directing a Cabinet in which real work is to be done.

Riaz Pasha is as courageous as he is honest. He feels bitterly aggrieved at what he considers his desertion by the French and English Governments; but I have little doubt that he would lend his services and his high reputation to a new Cabinet, in the event of the removal of Ismaïl Pasha.

Ali Pasha Moubarek is also an honourable man. He shared the dangers of the situation with Riaz and is entitled to some recognition for the courage and self-denial he has shown.

Chérif Pasha has not behaved well and does not altogether deserve the character of "honest man," which used to be applied to him. He has led the opposition to the Reform Movement, and has supported the Khedive in all the recent occurrences; but too much need not be expected from him for he is not a man of independent character. If he and Nubar could reconcile their differences, and Chérif would frankly throw in his lot with the Party of Reform, it might be expedient perhaps to condone the past and give him a place in a sort of coalition ministry. This short list nearly exhausts the names of natives who possess any of the requisite qualities as members of a responsible Cabinet.

I will only add a few words as to the excellent proposal for the appointment of an International Commission of Liquidation. I ventured to suggest to Lord Salisbury that the late Commission of Inquiry, as possessing special experience and the confidence of the public, was a body to whom such a duty might appropriately be entrusted, and I believe the suggestion has been favourably considered. . . .

C. Rivers Wilson.

As affairs in Egypt soon went from bad to worse under a Native Ministry the Governments of the different Powers entered upon an active correspondence with a view to obtaining some final adjustment of the situation. It was eventually decided that a Commission, composed of delegates from England, France, Germany, Austria, Italy, and Egypt, should be constituted to meet in Cairo and to agree upon a scheme of liquidation. This was to be embodied in the form of a law, which was to be ratified and promulgated by a decree of the new Khedive, Tewfik Pasha. The decree defined the powers of the Commission, and it declared that the law which was to be prepared should be without appeal. It recited that the five Powers had bound themselves to accept it in advance, and further that they would communicate it to the other European Powers who had been parties to the Mixed Tribunals in Egypt, and would invite their adherence.

On the 31st March, 1880, Lord Salisbury, who was then Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, nominated me President of the Commission, my English colleague being Mr. Aukland Colvin. Our meetings in Cairo

began in April, and the Law of Liquidation framed by the Commission was eventually accepted and signed by the Khedive on the 17th July, 1880. It is thirty-four years (1914) since that law was passed, and in spite of certain changes and modifications necessitated by altered conditions, it still remains the organic statute upon which the financial position of Egypt reposes.

I was completely tired out at the end of our work which had been very anxious and fatiguing, and had been carried on without intermission through the hot weather. Before I left Alexandria the Khedive gave a grand banquet to the Commissioners at the Palace of Ras el Tin, with a display of fireworks over the harbour. We all sat on a balcony to watch them, and I was on H.H.'s right side, but from sheer fatigue fell fast asleep while he was talking to me. In order to obtain a rest before returning to England I went to Constantinople with my friend Sir James Carmichael and we spent a delightful month on the Bosphorus. We stayed at Therapia, the summer residence of the Embassy. Mr., afterwards Lord, Goschen was our ambassador and showed us much civility. From there I sent to Lord Granville, who had succeeded Lord Salisbury at the Foreign Office, a report explanatory of the provisions of the Law of Liquidation from which I quote the concluding paragraphs :—

"The settlement effected by the Commission of Liquidation has provided the means for the complete extinction of the Floating Debt upon terms unexpectedly favourable to the creditors. It has secured by sufficient guarantees a reasonable interest on the consolidated debts and has established for their

gradual extinction a machinery the value of which will improve with the prosperity and development of the country. Finally, it has reserved, for the ordinary and extraordinary services of the Administration, an income which, with reasonable intelligence and prudence, should amply suffice for those purposes.

"There seems no reason to doubt that the revenue which is estimated as the base of these arrangements can be raised without difficulty and without hardship to the taxpayer, and may be even susceptible of augmentation in certain directions.

"The Khedive and his Ministers are sincerely desirous of governing the country well, and there is no lack of administrative ability, which only requires to be trained and encouraged.

"Many abuses have, however, to be eradicated, especially in the provincial branches of the administration; and many reforms have to be introduced, for which special knowledge and experience are needed. Above all, a sound system of justice is required for the protection of the native population and for inspiring them with the feeling of security which is essential to the proper development of the resources of the country.

"It is to be hoped that the Government will not fall into the error of declining to avail themselves, within reasonable limits, of European assistance for the completion of the work of organisation. Such assistance is indispensable for the consolidation of the arrangements framed by the Law of Liquidation, and for the prevention of financial disorder in the future."

Thus ended my official connection with Egypt. It may be interesting to note that in the spring of

1877 the price of Unified Stock was from 28 to 32. A few weeks after the termination of the Committee of Inquiry and the formation of the Nubar European Ministry it rose to 57, notwithstanding that the rate of interest had been reduced from 7 per cent. to 5 per cent. and again after the Law of Liquidation came into operation, to 4 per cent.

The estimated income of the Egyptian Government as settled by the Law of Liquidation, 1880, was £E.8,361,622, the estimated expenditure was £E.8,319,292, and the total funded debt was fixed at £E.96,218,772. According to the published returns of the Egyptian Government at December 31st, 1913, the revenue was £E.17,368,000, the expenditure £E.15,729,000, and the debt £E.94,202,540.

During the thirty-four years (1914) which have elapsed since the publication of the Law of Liquidation the population of Egypt has enormously increased, and the resources of the country under a just and intelligent administration have developed in an equal proportion. In spite of the increase in the expenditure the pressure upon the taxpaying population has sensibly diminished and the fellaheen are prosperous and contented. It will be noted, however, that the public indebtedness still remains at a high figure, showing a decrease of only some £E.2,000,000 below the £E.96,218,722 of 1880. It is true that great and recuperative expenditure has been made upon public works which have added largely to the wealth of the country; but if I may venture to offer one criticism upon the otherwise successful financial policy of the Government it is that so large a debt should still weigh upon the country and that an

the family. Lady Cowley was a *grande dame* and an ideal ambassadress. Her two charming daughters, at that time quite young girls, are the Dowager Lady Hardwicke and Lady Feodorowna Bertie, who now occupies the same position her mother held as ambassadress to Paris. Among the guests at Chantilly was Baron Hübner, the Austrian Ambassador, a quiet and agreeable man, who only a few days after we saw him, was the hero of an historic occurrence. It was on the 1st January, 1859, at the New Year's Day reception at the Tuileries that the Emperor Napoleon III. addressed to him the fatal words which were the precursors of the Franco-Austrian War, and of the eventual unification of Italy: "I regret that our relations with your Government are not so good as they have hitherto been."

I was a frequenter of the Embassy under all Lord Cowley's successors. From Lord Lyons I always received the greatest kindness. I had a good deal of business to do with him in connection with the Suez Canal and Egyptian matters. Lord Newton, in his recent admirable "Life of Lord Lyons," gives an excellent description of the Embassy as it was in those days. His Excellency was not married but his hospitality was unbounded, and he kept a first-rate table, at which I was often a guest. In his latter days Lord Lyons did not entertain general Parisian Society on a large scale, on account, as he told me, of the difficulty of reconciling the hostile feeling existing between the ladies of the old *régime* and of the Republic.

Lord Lytton and Lord Dufferin well maintained

the traditions of the Embassy, and both enjoyed the advantage of having charming and accomplished wives, who had had brilliant experiences when their husbands were Viceroys of India. Lord Lytton acquired immediately a peculiar popularity with the Parisians. He was a poet and a bit of a Bohemian, and attracted to the Embassy a literary and artistic society which made his receptions specially agreeable. Lord Dufferin, strange to say, was not a success in the early days of his residence in Paris. This was entirely attributable to political considerations, and to the somewhat strained relations which existed just then between England and France. In a short time his irresistible charm overcame all prejudices, and gained for him a popularity equal to that enjoyed by any of his predecessors.

Sir Edward Monson was one of my oldest and most intimate friends. He was a man of considerable ability, who wrote extremely well, and had been *persona grata* at the Embassy at Vienna, which he had previously occupied. He had begun his diplomatic career as *attaché* to Lord Lyons in Washington, and subsequently in Paris, but left the service to stand as a candidate for the family borough of Reigate. He was elected, but lost his seat on petition. Finding himself without occupation he accepted the post of Consul at the Azores. Afterwards he became Consul-General at Buda Pesth, and by this means re-entered the diplomatic service. His speeches were a feature at the annual meetings of the Chamber of Commerce when he was our Ambassador in Paris.

Falconer Attlee, the British Consul, was a great

the family. Lady Cowley was a *grande dame* and an ideal ambassadress. Her two charming daughters, at that time quite young girls, are the Dowager Lady Hardwicke and Lady Feodorowna Bertie, who now occupies the same position her mother held as ambassadress to Paris. Among the guests at Chantilly was Baron Hübner, the Austrian Ambassador, a quiet and agreeable man, who only a few days after we saw him, was the hero of an historic occurrence. It was on the 1st January, 1859, at the New Year's Day reception at the Tuileries that the Emperor Napoleon III. addressed to him the fatal words which were the precursors of the Franco-Austrian War, and of the eventual unification of Italy: "I regret that our relations with your Government are not so good as they have hitherto been."

I was a frequenter of the Embassy under all Lord Cowley's successors. From Lord Lyons I always received the greatest kindness. I had a good deal of business to do with him in connection with the Suez Canal and Egyptian matters. Lord Newton, in his recent admirable "Life of Lord Lyons," gives an excellent description of the Embassy as it was in those days. His Excellency was not married but his hospitality was unbounded, and he kept a first-rate table, at which I was often a guest. In his latter days Lord Lyons did not entertain general Parisian Society on a large scale, on account, as he told me, of the difficulty of reconciling the hostile feeling existing between the ladies of the old *régime* and of the Republic.

Lord Lytton and Lord Dufferin well maintained

the traditions of the Embassy, and both enjoyed the advantage of having charming and accomplished wives, who had had brilliant experiences when their husbands were Viceroys of India. Lord Lytton acquired immediately a peculiar popularity with the Parisians. He was a poet and a bit of a Bohemian, and attracted to the Embassy a literary and artistic society which made his receptions specially agreeable. Lord Dufferin, strange to say, was not a success in the early days of his residence in Paris. This was entirely attributable to political considerations, and to the somewhat strained relations which existed just then between England and France. In a short time his irresistible charm overcame all prejudices, and gained for him a popularity equal to that enjoyed by any of his predecessors.

Sir Edward Monson was one of my oldest and most intimate friends. He was a man of considerable ability, who wrote extremely well, and had been *persona grata* at the Embassy at Vienna, which he had previously occupied. He had begun his diplomatic career as *attaché* to Lord Lyons in Washington, and subsequently in Paris, but left the service to stand as a candidate for the family borough of Reigate. He was elected, but lost his seat on petition. Finding himself without occupation he accepted the post of Consul at the Azores. Afterwards he became Consul-General at Buda Pesth, and by this means re-entered the diplomatic service. His speeches were a feature at the annual meetings of the Chamber of Commerce when he was our Ambassador in Paris.

Falconer Attlee, the British Consul, was a great

character and well known to the English community in Paris. He had originally been private secretary to Lord Cowley, and through him was appointed Consul. He also held the post of "archivist" to the Embassy, but he was generally known by the members of the staff as "the Librarian." He held his post for many years. Ambassadors came and ambassadors went, but there remained Attlee, always ready for a gossip in his room in the Chancery, a sort of calling place for all the diplomats passing through Paris. Àpropos of the Chancery I may recall a little Treasury anecdote. In my early official days I was a constant visitor to the secretaries and *attachés* whose work was conducted in that portion of the Embassy building. The Embassy itself, which had been the residence of Princess Pauline Borghese, and was bought for the English Government by the Duke of Wellington in 1814, had been allowed to fall into considerable disrepair, and constant claims were made upon the Treasury for money for works of restoration. Both the Treasury, and the House of Commons which had to vote the money, got tired of these applications—and I may say that public economy in those days was more genuine than at present—so it was at last determined to ask Parliament to vote a lump sum to put the place into complete repair. Accordingly a sum of £20,000 was included in the Estimate; and was voted on the understanding that the work was to be thorough, and that no more was to be heard of the British Embassy. One day when I was in the Chancery, which was in a most dilapidated condition, I congratulated the staff, one of whom

at least lived in the building, that thanks to the generosity of H.M.'s Government, they would soon be properly housed. "Not at all," they said, "practically the whole of the money voted by Parliament is to be spent upon the main residence; only a trivial sum is coming to us for very urgent repairs." I saw that the Treasury had been done, and on my return home mentioned the matter, with the result that the Office of Works was at once directed to furnish an estimate for putting the Chancery building into proper repair, the cost to be included in the £20,000 granted, subtracting thereby so much from the embellishment of the ambassador's residence. Lord Cowley was furious, but I don't think he ever discovered the reason of the Treasury's interference.

When the well-known play of *Diplomacy*, of which, by-the-by, my cousin Charlie Stephenson was the author or adapter, was first produced by the Bancrofts, Squire Bancroft went over to Paris, and, with the assistance of Ottiwell Adams and General Clermont, the military attaché, took an exact copy of the room where the staff worked at the Chancery, which was faithfully reproduced in the last act of the play, with the photographs of many generations of attachés who had passed through the Embassy decorating the walls.

In those days of economy a constant subject of conflict between the Treasury and the Foreign Office was the building of British Embassies in various foreign capitals; the Treasury preferring to hire accommodation, while the Foreign Office was in favour of building, and generally on a monumental scale. I

remember we had a tremendous fight over Washington, and later over Berlin, Vienna, and Madrid, but the Foreign Office always got its own way eventually, and I must say upon reflection that I think it is only right our representatives abroad should be suitably lodged in buildings which are the property of their own Government.

I never went to Paris without seeing Blowitz, the famous correspondent of the *Times*. A man of great talent and overweening vanity, he was really a very good fellow, and would take any amount of trouble to oblige a friend. His enterprise in obtaining information for his paper was quite extraordinary. His greatest feat in this line, of which he was very proud, was the securing of a copy of the Treaty of Berlin, which was published in the *Times* before it was known to the rest of the world. He gives an account of this in his "Memoirs," which somehow fell far short of the expectations which had been formed respecting them.

Blowitz once got me into a scrape with Gambetta. It was at the time when the so-called "Dual Note," in reference to the joint interference of England and France in Egypt, was in course of negotiation between Gambetta and Lord Granville. I was cognizant of what was taking place, and was indeed in the confidence of Gambetta. The only other person in Paris, I believe, who was in the secret, was Nubar Pasha. It was necessary that the matter should be kept profoundly quiet, but one morning it was announced in the *Times* in a despatch from Blowitz. Gambetta was extremely annoyed, and attributed the indiscretion to me, though I was perfectly innocent,

and had never said a word on the subject to Blowitz. I have reason to believe that the culprit was Nubar, who may have had his motives for desiring publicity. I expressed to Blowitz in strong terms my sense of the indiscretion he had committed, saying, "I thought you were something more than a newspaper man—that you had the ambition of being a great political character; what you have done may have a very prejudicial effect." He looked somewhat disconcerted, but replied, "Mon ami, on est journaliste avant tout!"

When Sir Edward Monson was ambassador in Paris, he gave the usual dinner on the King's birthday, at which Blowitz was present. At its conclusion, after the King's health had been drunk, Sir Edward rose and made a somewhat lengthy speech, which appeared almost "textuellement" in the *Times* the next morning. When next I saw Blowitz I said to him: "It was rather smart of you to get that speech from H.E." "I give you my word that I did no such thing," he replied. "I used to be very proud of my memory in former years, and I wanted to test it, probably for the last time [he was then about to retire], so directly after the dinner I went to my office, wrote down the speech, and telegraphed it to London." I must add that Blowitz was never encouraged at the Embassy in his capacity as correspondent, Lord Lyons, especially, being very apprehensive as to his discretion. On the other hand, the able and popular correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, Sir Campbell Clarke, was always welcome at the Chancery, implicit confidence being placed in his discretion. He and Lady Clarke, who

was a sister of Lord Burnham, were much liked in Paris. They had a charming apartment, first at the corner of the Boulevard and Place de l'Opéra, and afterwards in the Champs Elysées, and they entertained most hospitably.

In spite of his peculiar appearance, Blowitz was well known as an admirer of the fair sex; he was extremely witty, and certainly knew how to make himself agreeable to the ladies. He always showed with pride a photograph of Sarah Bernhardt, on which she had inscribed, "Au plus fin d'esprit, la plus fine de corps." It will be remembered that in her earlier years the slimness of the divine Sarah was phenomenal, and was the subject of many Parisian witticisms.

One always met political and other celebrities at the receptions and dinner-parties of Mme. Juliette Adam, to which I was occasionally invited. She had a charming manner, and was still a very beautiful woman; her conversation was delightful, and she managed her salon with remarkable tact. When the relations between France and England became somewhat strained I had with regret to cease attending her receptions, owing to the strong English antipathies which she developed, and to which she gave expression in the publications of the day. I am glad to observe now (1915) that in the altered political circumstances she has become a warm adherent of the alliance between France and England.

In 186– I came into communication with M. Rouher, the powerful minister of Napoleon III. Our two Governments were anxious to bring about, if possible, a working arrangement between the two

great subsidised mail steamship companies, the P. and O. and the Messageries Impériale. I was commissioned by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to go to Paris and discuss the matter confidentially; but nothing came of my negotiations. I had more than one interview with M. Rouher. My appointments were for 8 a.m., and already, at this early hour, I always found his antechamber filled with persons who were waiting to see him.

One of my colleagues on the Commission for negotiating the Commercial Treaty with France in 1881 was Mr., afterwards Sir, Joseph Eyre Crowe. He was the joint writer with Cavalcaselli of the well-known "History of Painting in Italy." Besides being a distinguished art critic, he was an excellent official, and represented the Foreign Office as Commercial Attaché to the Embassy in Paris. Through him I made the acquaintance of Gérome the painter. I remember an amusing dinner given by Crowe at Paillard's to Gérome, Sir Charles Dilke, and myself. Gérome was an extremely good-looking man, whose appearance was particularly striking owing to his black moustache and eyebrows and his abundance of white hair. Possibly on this account the conversation happened to turn on hair-dyeing, and Gérome told us of a friend of his who also was distinguished by a fine head of white hair. Meeting him one day in the street he did not at first recognise him, his hair having suddenly become a sable black. "O," said Gérome, "que sont devenus vos beaux cheveux blancs?" "Mon ami," was the reply, "je n'étai pas digne de les porter."

One of the best known figures of his time in

Paris society was the Prince de Sagan, with whom I was on tolerably intimate terms. He was quite unlike anybody else, both in appearance and conversation. Though not an old man he also had a romantic head of white hair, and was conspicuous by the broad, black ribbon to which his eyeglass was attached, which floated across his loose white waistcoat. The young men of the day tried to imitate his dress, but never acquired the chic peculiar to the "Roi de Paris" as he was popularly called.

Another of my friends was the Prince de Hanault, a curious specimen of the German aristocratic morgue. He took a fancy to me, and we often dined together, and he used to invite me to stay with him in what he described as his "grand bête de chateau" in Germany. I never went, for he was really an awful bore. He had a great opinion of his rank and importance, and upon one occasion at the Jockey Club in Vienna when a member said to him, "Vous plaisantez, mon Prince," he drew himself up and replied, "Je ne *b*laisante jamais avec mes inférieurs!" He asked me one day, "Que faites vous donc, M. Wilson, en Angleterre?" Knowing I should get a rise out of him I answered, "Je suis fonctionnaire." He could only gasp out "Comment! M. Wilson est *v*onctionnaire!" I suppose he had imagined that I was a very great man in my own country, but I must add that nevertheless he continued to honour me with his friendship.

I made the acquaintance of General Boulanger in 1885. He had just acquired a strange popularity, and his name was in every mouth. I happened to mention casually to my friend Arthur Meyer, the

well known *rédacteur* of the *Gaulois*, that I should like to know him. "That," said Meyer, "can easily be managed. I'll ask Clémenceau to arrange the meeting." Accordingly the next evening Meyer and I went to Clémenceau's house, where we found him alone with the General. We spent a long and interesting evening. The General remained very quiet; Clémenceau, who did most of the talking, introduced him by saying: "Eh bien, vous vouliez faire la connaissance du général, regardez le donc, c'est un bel homme, n'est ce pas?" and so went on, showing him off in a half sarcastic tone. I looked at Boulanger who said nothing, but smiled and stroked his moustache, without appearing to resent his friend's manner, and I wondered "Now which of these two has the superior mind!" The future showed that there could not be much doubt upon that point; one proved to be a great man, and the other a mere windbag! The next day Meyer, meeting Clémenceau in the street, and referring to our conversation with Boulanger, said to him: Dites moi franchement, M. Clémenceau, lequel de vous deux va rouler l'autre?" Clémenceau replied, "Si lui me roule il sera joliment fort!" It was pretty evident that Clémenceau had already taken the measure of the "'brav' général." However, the French people would have him at any price.

I saw Boulanger frequently after this, as well as his faithful friend Count Dillon, whose advice, if he had followed it, might have saved him from making the mistakes which led to his downfall. Upon one occasion, when the General was Minister of War, I wrote a request to see him as I had a favour to ask.

He sent his Aide-de-Camp to invite me to breakfast with him at Durand's in the Place de la Madeleine. We breakfasted *tête-à-tête* the next morning in a cabinet particulier, and he asked what he could do for me. I begged him for an introduction to M. X, the well known proprietor of the Magazins du Louvre, whom I wanted to see on a matter of business; he was understood to be a great friend of the General's, and was said to be financing him. "M. X? mais—je ne le connais pas—c'est à dire je crois qu'il m'a une fois envoyé une contribution pour un objet quelquonque." I apologised for my mistake, and we continued our breakfast. When the coffee and liqueurs were brought Boulanger told the waiter to fetch him "de quoi écrire," and saying to me, "Ah, vous vouliez une introduction pour M. X," he wrote me a warm introduction to the gentleman in question beginning, "Mon cher ami!" I give this anecdote as an instance of the General's untruthfulness, which later on astonished his friends in London.

After he had been frightened out of France by Constan in 1889, General Boulanger came to London where he received a somewhat mixed reception, but made some sensation by riding in Rotten Row on his famous black charger. He took a house in Portland Place, where he lived with Mme. de Bonnemains. Count Dillon was with him, and the Duchesse d'Uzès came to England in the interest of his cause, and supplied him with large funds in the hope that he might become instrumental in the Legitimist restoration. The elections were then pending, and both the Duchesse and his other adherents strongly urged him to return to France

and show himself to the constituencies; the enthusiasm being so great in his favour that it was expected he would sweep the board and be raised to supreme power.

The entreaties of his friends at length prevailed, and his departure was arranged. A cab was at the door to take him to the station, and his luggage had actually been placed upon it, when at the last moment Mme. de Bonnemains threw herself at his feet, and implored him for her sake to abandon his project, and not to expose himself to the danger which she apprehended. She gained her point; the luggage was brought back into the house, the cab was dismissed, and so ended the adventure of Général Boulanger. No further public notice was taken of him until two years later, when he shot himself in Brussels on the grave of Mme. de Bonnemains, who had died a short time previously.

CHAPTER XXII

PARIS COMMERCIAL TREATY

1881

Treaty of 1860—Challemel de Lacour—Failure of our negotiations—Sir Robert Morier—Embassy to China—Jamaica.

In May, 1881, when Mr. Gladstone was Prime Minister and Lord Granville Foreign Secretary, a Royal Commission was appointed by the Government for the purpose "of conferring in a friendly spirit with delegates to be appointed by the President of the French Republic, and of discussing with them certain matters relating to commerce and navigation: with a view to the conclusion of a new treaty of commerce and navigation between Great Britain and France." Sir Charles Dilke was the chairman and I was one of the commissioners. The others were Mr. Baxter, Sir Charles Kennedy, and Mr. Joseph Eyre Crowe, and Mr. (now Sir) Henry Austin Lee was our secretary. The Commercial Treaty of 1860, which had been negotiated by Mr. Cobden on the one hand, and on the other by representatives of the French Government under the immediate direction of the Emperor Napoleon, had placed commerce between the two countries upon "most favoured nation" footing. It regulated the duties leviable upon the produce and manufactures of the one

country upon importation into the other, and provided that vessels of either country were to be charged shipping duties in France and the United Kingdom respectively, on the footing of national vessels.

Certain modifications of the Treaty were introduced by subsequent conventions, until 1879, when a new general tariff having been introduced in France, the French Government announced that these Treaty arrangements must be terminated, but that they were prepared to enter into negotiations for making a new arrangement. The Emperor Napoleon had been inclined to free trade principles, and wisely believed that a close commercial alliance between the two countries would strengthen political relations between them. He had warmly welcomed Mr. Cobden, and it was through the weight of his personal authority, supported by his great minister, Rouher, that the Treaty of 1860 was concluded. Material reductions were made in the duties imposed on British commodities imported into France, while a great boon was conferred on the latter country by the reduction of the duty upon French wine. The treaty worked very beneficially for both countries, and it was somewhat of a shock to our commercial community when they found in 1880 that they would have to reconsider and materially modify the conditions under which their trade was conducted with their French neighbours.

In order to make myself acquainted with the feelings and opinions of our manufacturers I sought to place myself in communication with their leading representatives, and in company with Mr. Austin

Lee I visited most of our manufacturing centres—Leeds, Bradford, Sheffield, Nottingham, Manchester, etc. In London, too, during the sittings of our Commission, we were waited on by the manufacturers, and were in constant consultation with them. We held many sittings at the Foreign Office, which were often attended by M. Challemel de Lacour, the French ambassador in London, who, however, did not enter much into the details of the business. Challemel de Lacour was a somewhat singular representative of France. He was first brought into general notice just after the Franco-Prussian War, and became notorious through a telegram he is said to have sent when Prefect at Lyons, to a general in a neighbouring town who had asked him for instructions how to deal with certain "communard" prisoners. The answer was short and to the point: "Fusillez-moi ces gens!"

He was a very violent politician, a remarkable orator, and a man of considerable talent, but his social standing was not such as to qualify him for the position of an ambassador. He had also an exceedingly hasty temper as the following anecdote will indicate. One day when he was to attend a meeting of our conference, Sir Charles Dilke sent out word asking him to be good enough to wait a few minutes, pending a short discussion which we were having among ourselves. He had not had to wait more than two or three minutes when, followed by all his staff, he entered the big conference room with a furious mien and as red as a turkey-cock, holding his watch in his hand. Dilke succeeded in pacifying him, but he looked very sulky all through the

meeting. After the proceedings, in which he took no part, were over, Austin Lee, observing that he had been scribbling the whole time on the blotting-paper in front of him, had the curiosity to look what he had been doing. He found the paper completely covered with drawings of guillotines!

After holding many meetings in London our Commission adjourned to Paris in September, 1881, and continued its sittings at the Foreign Office on the Quai D'Orsay. Joined with us this time were several French representatives, the chief of whom, M. Tirard, the Minister of Commerce, presided over the conference. There is no particular interest in recalling the details of our prolonged negotiations; it is sufficient to say that our efforts to maintain at least a position as advantageous as that secured by the Treaty of 1860 were ineffectual. M. de Freycinet, the head of the Government, felt unable to make concessions which would meet the approval of the Chambers, and it became evident that there was no longer any prospect of the two Governments being able to conclude a tariff treaty. A temporary agreement was patched up in the form of a most favoured-nation treaty, and we returned to England *reinfectâ*. We received a handsome testimonial from Lord Granville as to the manner in which we had conducted our negotiations, and expressing the satisfaction of H.M.'s Government with our proceedings.

Not long afterwards a banquet was given by the Lord Mayor at the Mansion House to the Chambers of Commerce, to which the members of our late Commission were invited. The loyal speeches as well as others appropriate to the occasion were delivered with

their usual prolixity, when, towards the end of the evening, and when the list of toasts was nearly exhausted, Sir Robert Morier was called upon to speak. He rose and commenced his speech in the following words: "My lords, ladies and gentlemen, this is the moment to which I have been looking forward for years, the moment when I should stand face to face with an audience of my countrymen, and expound my views upon commercial treaties." A subdued groan ran through the spacious hall, and before Sir Robert had spoken for five minutes a general hum of conversation marked the indifference of the company and disconcerted the unfortunate orator. He was profoundly versed in all matters relating to international commercial relations, of which he had made a special study; his wish, therefore, to make his speech upon this occasion was very natural, and had it been delivered in the early part of the evening it would no doubt have received the attention which it deserved. I have always remembered this little episode as an indication of the want of tact which may attend the possession of talents of high order; it was all the more remarkable in Sir Robert Morier who held a great position in the diplomatic world.

When I was serving on the International Suez Canal Neutrality Commission in Paris in 188— my colleague and kindest of friends Sir Julian (afterwards Lord) Pauncefote asked me on behalf of Lord Granville, whether I would care to accept the Embassy to China, just vacated by the retirement of Sir John Walsham. The offer did not tempt me. I should have had to sacrifice a most pleasant life in

Europe and begin a new career in a distant and not very congenial country with doubtful prospects of promotion in a service entered late in life, for which there would be many competitors with better claims than myself. Many years before I had had one other chance of exchanging my Treasury career for a different branch of the public service. On the reconstruction of the Government of Jamaica in 1866, after the rebellion in the suppression of which Governor Eyre received so much undeserved obloquy from Exeter Hall and the philanthropic extremists, Mr. Cardwell, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, offered me the Financial Membership of the new Council. The post was well remunerated and was not without attractions. Before making up my mind I consulted Anthony Trollope, who, in his capacity of Inspector of the Post Office, had recently visited the West Indies, and had written a very entertaining book full of information on the various islands. He advised dead against my acceptance, speaking with much disdain of social and official life in Jamaica, which he described as something inferior indeed to "beer and skittles." He confirmed me in my inclination to decline Mr. Cardwell's kind offer, which would have shifted me into a Colonial career, and removed me from the opportunities and advantages connected with H.M.'s Treasury.

CHAPTER XXIII

BRUSSELS MONETARY CONFERENCE

1892

Bimetallism—Members of the Conference—Our opposition—Brussels—Abuse from bimetallists—Gladstone's speech—Thoughts on Mr. Gladstone—Repeal of the Income Tax.

In 1892, at the instigation of the American Government, an International Conference was convened for inquiring into the relative merits of a single gold standard, or of a double gold and silver standard, for gradual and general introduction into the monetary systems of various countries. The English Commissioners were Sir Charles Fremantle, Deputy Master of the Mint, and myself, as more particularly representing the Government, together with Mr. Alfred de Rothschild, Mr. Bertram Currie, chief partner in the house of Glynns, Sir Guildford Molesworth, a distinguished Indian official, and Sir William Houldsworth. Sir William Harcourt was then Chancellor of the Exchequer, and was a strong gold monometallist. I met him that autumn at Invercauld, where we were both staying with his brother-in-law Sir Algernon Borthwick, afterwards Lord Glenesk. He asked me my opinion upon the vexed question of bimetallism, which at that time had got a strong and almost dangerous hold upon a good many leading politicians. I answered that I

had never deviated from the principles laid down in Lord Liverpool's letter. This showed him that I entirely shared his views, and he asked me to serve on the proposed Commission. The famous letter addressed by Lord Liverpool, father of the Prime Minister, to the King in 1816, formed the basis upon which the resumption of specie payments were made, and of the monetary system which was then established, and which has ever since been observed in this country. Lord Liverpool's arguments in favour of a single gold standard may have been challenged, but in my judgment have never been refuted.

The Conference met at Brussels, and was attended by representatives of many nationalities. The proceedings were opened by M. Bernhardt, the Belgian Prime Minister, but were afterwards presided over by Mr. Montefiore Levi. A considerable number of meetings were held, and the bimetallists explained their views in speeches of interminable length. One of the American representatives, Mr. Jones of Nevada, a tremendous bimetallist, with large personal interests in the silver mines of Nevada, spoke without a check during two consecutive sittings. I could not help remarking at the time that a cause, of which the first principles were of a sufficiently simple nature, must be somewhat weak to require so lengthy an apology. Senator Jones was all the same a man of great ability, and the American representation generally was composed of men of high standing and influence. I made particular friends with Senator Allison, a very attractive personality, who upon more than one occasion had been considered a likely candidate for the Presidency of the United States. A

different type was Professor X. of —— University. His American colleagues had addressed the conference in English, which was generally understood, though all the speeches were translated into French with extraordinary cleverness by a well known Russian political economist. This worthy professor, however, took it into his head that American culture would not be sufficiently represented unless he addressed the meeting in the French language, and he resolved to do so. He prepared his speech in English, had it translated, and read it out to the meeting in French; but it might have been Sanskrit or Chinese for all the Conference knew, as not a word of it was intelligible!

After many discussions and the expounding of much diversity of opinion, Mr. Alfred de Rothschild first put forward a practical proposition for the consideration of the Conference. He spoke with all the weight attaching to his high financial position, as well as to his personal experience and knowledge of the subject of which he treated. His proposal received the sympathetic consideration of the meeting, but being of a tentative character, and in the nature of a compromise, it failed to secure the adhesion of either of the contending parties. Sir William Harcourt had been closely following the proceedings, and was manifesting some anxiety at the strong efforts made by the bimetallists to impress their views upon the Conference. Sir Charles Fremantle and I saw accordingly that the time had arrived to make a statement of our views, which were those of our Government. The substance of it was a declaration that the existing gold monometallic system was best adapted to the interests of

England; that it had worked satisfactorily over a series of years: and that present circumstances afforded no reason for a departure from it, and from the principles upon which it was founded. Finally that H.M.'s Government was not prepared to consider a modification or alteration of the existing system. We were supported by Mr. Bertram Currie, while Sir G. Molesworth and Sir William Houldsworth spoke in favour of the bimetallic theory. Our attitude was the death knell of the Conference, which broke up without coming to any decision.

We left Brussels with regret, after a very agreeable stay of some weeks, apart from the pleasure of meeting so many eminent persons of various nationalities, we had been entertained with great hospitality by Brussels society. I personally received much kindness from M. Léon Lambert and his charming wife, the daughter of Baron Gustave Rothschild, and I was glad to renew acquaintance with my old friend Maurice Delfosse, so well known in London as Secretary to the Belgian Legation under M. Van der Weyer, and afterwards Belgian Minister in Washington. My sister Alice had for a lengthened period been Mother Superior to the great institution of the Sacré Cœur at Jette St. Pierre, near Brussels, and had had amongst her pupils many of the ladies whom I met during my stay. She had acquired a wonderful influence over them, and was greatly beloved and looked up to—so much so that I, owing to my relationship to her, obtained an undeserved reputation, as if some of her beautiful qualities were reflected in me—"Comment, vous êtes le frère de

Madame Wilson ?" used to be said to me in almost reverential tones. Alas ! they little knew.

On my return to England I came in for a good deal of personal abuse from the bimetallists, who, not satisfied at their fiasco at the Conference, gave notice for a discussion of the whole subject in the House of Commons. Sir Henry Meysey Thompson was chosen as their mouthpiece to move a resolution. Feeling ran so strongly that Sir William Harcourt was rather nervous as to the result of the debate, and before it came on he went to Mr. Gladstone, the Prime Minister, and told him it was very important that he should speak on the subject. Mr. Gladstone replied that it was many years since he had been familiar with the question, that he had not given it his attention, nor had he followed it in its recent phases. Sir William urged upon him the necessity of his intervention, on account of the peculiar weight which his authority would carry. I was present at the debate at the end of which Mr. Gladstone rose and spoke for about twenty minutes. Without going in detail through recent events, he spoke upon broad general principles. Recalling the inauguration of our present system of currency under which England had so greatly prospered, he spoke with such earnestness, knowledge, and conviction, that he completely carried the House, and the division was a large majority to the Government. Sir William Harcourt was enchanted, and he told me afterwards of his preliminary conversation with Mr. Gladstone.

A few nights later I was dining at Lord Brassey's where Mr. Gladstone was one of the party. After the ladies had left the room he saw me, jumped up,

and holding both his hands out to me exclaimed, "Well, were you pleased with me?" I told him how delighted I was at his speech, and he said, almost repeating Sir William's words to me, "Harcourt came to me just before the debate and asked me to speak, although really I was quite unacquainted with the subject." Mr. Gladstone was in wonderful spirits and seemed almost like a schoolboy hoping to be praised for some successful exercise, but his speech certainly was a remarkable achievement and showed him at his best.

I naturally saw a good deal of Mr. Gladstone in my capacity of Comptroller-General of the National Debt Office; it was a pleasure and a privilege to work with him, and all public servants who had personal relations with him had reason to like and admire him. He was generous in his appreciation of good work, and never scanty in his approval. Civil servants had a firm friend in Mr. Gladstone; his feeling towards them was totally different from that of Mr. Disraeli, who I fancy had somewhat of a contempt for a profession which he looked upon as one of deskwork and drudgery, not realising how little a statesman could achieve without the assistance of a trained and experienced clerical staff. The rapidity and completeness with which Mr. Gladstone mastered the details of an administrative measure, however complicated, were extraordinary. When he converted the malt tax into the present beer duty, the officials of the inland revenue, from the chairman to the lowest excise officer, were astounded at the manner in which he made himself acquainted with the details of that most complicated question. But

work of this sort seemed to be a labour of love to him. I can see now Sir Charles Pressley, the Chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue, coming down the stairs in Downing Street after a two hours' interview with Mr. Gladstone, mopping his face, down which the perspiration streamed and exclaiming, "Oh, my body and soul!" Sir Charles Pressley himself was an admirable official, of whom Mr. Gladstone had a very high opinion.

In the memorable election of 1874 Mr. Gladstone offered as a bribe to the constituencies if they would return him to power, a repeal of the income tax. It has often been wondered by what combination he would supply this source of revenue, which had enabled Sir Robert Peel to carry his great Free Trade measures in 1842, and had ever since been one of the chief pillars of our financial system. He failed in his bid for power, and the Tory party, with Mr. Disraeli at its head, came in with a majority of forty-eight. Mr. Gladstone's secret was well kept, and so far as I am aware has never been revealed, but I have reason to know that his plan consisted mainly of a readjustment of the death duties. It was afterwards adopted and carried out in 1894 by Sir William Harcourt, to whom Mr. Gladstone had confided it; but alas! for the British taxpayer, it was unaccompanied by the abolition of the income tax.

Mr. Gladstone's chief characteristics were undoubtedly his extraordinary earnestness and his capacity for throwing himself into the subject in which he was interested to the exclusion of all other considerations. When dealing with some question,

even in the House of Commons, he would seem at first to be weighing its various aspects, until, having definitely made up his mind, he would express himself with an intensity of conviction that carried all before it; and although five minutes before he himself may have been in doubt, yet he looked with astonishment and indignation upon anybody who took a different view to the one he had just arrived at. Nothing could be more apposite than Mr. W. E. Forster's well-known description of him: "The Right Honourable gentleman can persuade most people of most things: he can persuade himself of anything."

The late Sir Robert Peel, who had been First Commissioner of Works, told me that when staying once at Hawarden he was walking in the park with Mr. Gladstone when the conversation turned on the want of proper supervision over the buildings and improvements of London. It was àpropos, I think, of the removal of the statue of the Duke of Wellington opposite Apsley House. Mr. Gladstone threw himself into the subject with the greatest enthusiasm, "You are right," he said, "this matter must be thoroughly gone into, we must all unite over so excellent an object. The dictionary of the English language does not contain words strong enough to express what I feel upon this subject." He was thoroughly in earnest at the moment, but it cannot be said that London ever derived any practical advantage from the expression of these admirable sentiments.

I cannot refrain from mentioning a small instance of Mr. Gladstone's personal kindness. I had been

bitten in the wrist by one of my bulldogs, and had to wear my arm in a sling. Having to see Mr. Gladstone on business in Carlton House Terrace he asked what was the matter with me and I told him. "Oh," he said, "you've got a very awkward sling," and he sent for Mrs. Gladstone and asked her to bring an arm-rest which he had used himself upon the occasion of some injury. He and Mrs. Gladstone then set to work to tie and fix it properly on my arm, and he would not begin business until it had been adjusted satisfactorily.

CHAPTER XXIV

MR. HUNTINGTON AND THE CENTRAL PACIFIC RAILWAY

1894

My retirement from the Treasury—Representative of British bondholders—Mr. Huntington—Central Pacific Railway—American reporters—Armenian outrages—Washington—Success of my mission—Extract from *New York Herald.*

In the autumn of 1894, when I was contemplating retirement from the public service, an offer was made to me to go out to the United States as the representative of the bondholders of the Central Pacific Railway, who had reason to complain of the proceedings of the President of the Company, Mr. C. P. Huntington. I had had little experience of railway administration or finance and hesitated at first to undertake the mission, but after consulting with the best authorities in the city and making myself acquainted with the circumstances of the case, I agreed to the proposal. Before starting I resigned my official directorship of the Suez Canal Company, and also my position as Comptroller-General of the National Debt. I had always been on the best of terms with the staff, and when I left they presented me with a very handsome silver inkstand and set of candlesticks. I gave up my post with great regret and my associations with it have always been a pleasant memory

to me. The work was interesting and my position carried with it a considerable amount of independence, my responsibility being really only to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with whom I was in constant communication. In awarding me my pension after thirty-eight years of official life the Treasury and the Foreign Office were good enough to write me complimentary letters of appreciation of my services, and on the recommendation of Sir William Harcourt, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who wrote me a very kind letter, I received the distinction of G.C.M.G.

I left for New York in November, 1894, and on my arrival I at once interviewed Mr. C. P. Huntington. Mr. Huntington occupied a very prominent position in the railway world, and was a big man in every sense. He was a large, handsome man of fine physique, with a massive brow and not at all an unpleasing expression, and he struck me as having a very strong will and great energy and power of combination. Everyone, even his enemies, spoke of him as a remarkable man, which he undoubtedly was. He was one of the "great four," as they were called, to whom were due the construction of the vast system of railways from the Atlantic to the Pacific, a work requiring enterprise and energy of no mean order. The other three were Mr. Stamford, the Governor of the State of California, Mr. Hopkins, and Mr. Crocker, and they all realised very large fortunes.

The Central Pacific Railway formed part of the great Southern Pacific system with which it is now incorporated, and Mr. Huntington suggested that

I should proceed to San Francisco, the headquarters of the company, travelling all over the lines and placing myself in personal communication with its Board and officers. For this purpose he placed at my disposal his private car, in which I travelled with my companions from New York through Washington to New Orleans, and thence up the Pacific Slope through Louisiana, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and Lower California to San Francisco. New Orleans is one of the most curious cities of the United States, owing to the juxtaposition of the old French town which still remains in a state of quiescence and decay, side by side with the busy and populous modern part of the city. The old-fashioned streets and residences are still inhabited by the descendants of the French families, who have long ago lost their social and commercial supremacy. Charles Lesseps mentioned a curious circumstance to me—when passing through New Orleans on his way to Panama he came across many members of the Lesseps family, whose ancestors must have settled there long years ago. They gave him a warm welcome and entertained him at a banquet.

I remained two or three weeks in San Francisco and held a sort of formal inquiry into the affairs of the company and into its management, as to which complaints had been made by the proprietors. I found a strong feeling of hostility prevailing against Mr. Huntington throughout California, the allegations against him being that he had acquired a monopoly of all railway communication both into, and within, the State, thereby enabling him to

control and increase the rates to the detriment of the interests of the commercial and general community. The Independent Press generally spoke of him as "the Octopus."

My first contact with reporters had been in New York at the moment of my arrival. As I stepped off the gangway of the steamer on to the wharf, I was at once surrounded by a small crowd of individuals armed with notebooks and pencils. One of their number, acting as spokesman, said: "Sir, we understand you have come over to inquire into the affairs of the Central Pacific Railway; will you please tell us what your report is going to be?" My answer can be imagined, but I was gratified to read next day in the papers that I had been "courteous but uncommunicative." In a Los Angeles paper a reporter, whom I never even saw, gave an account of a supposed conversation with me, and described me as a well preserved gentleman of about sixty, weighing 160 lbs.! In San Francisco, of course, I was pursued by reporters, whose statements to their papers were generally of a highly imaginative character. One day I received a visit from a gentleman who had interviewed me two or three times already upon the railway question; he was accompanied by an individual who said nothing, but gazed at me very attentively. The reporter began: "Sir, I have come to ask your opinion upon the Armenian Question." Somewhat surprised I answered, "Why on earth do you come to me? I know no more about the Armenian Question than you yourself or the first man in the street." He seemed somewhat taken aback and said, "But, sir,

you've been in Armenia?" "Never in my life; my only knowledge of Armenia lies in the fact of my having a distinguished Armenian, Nubar Pasha, for a particular friend; but on the Armenian Question, as you call it, I am no authority whatsoever," and so the interview ended. The next morning one of the leading papers appeared with a ghastly portrait of myself, together with an article which I cannot refrain from inserting as it is so characteristic of American journalism.

ARMENIAN OUTRAGES.

"There is a gentleman in San Francisco who is probably as thoroughly familiar with that much persecuted race of Christians, the Armenians, as any man at present in America. The gentleman referred to is Sir Charles Rivers Wilson. Sir Rivers Wilson spent some time in Turkey and Egypt some years ago. He saw a great deal of the Armenians, and was an interested student of their customs and habits. He numbers among his acquaintances many Armenians who occupy prominent political positions in Egypt and Turkey. He tells a most interesting story of their peculiar characteristics and idiosyncrasies. 'I do not know why I should be approached on the Armenian question,' he said, when seen yesterday afternoon at the Palace Hotel. 'I cannot imagine what undiscovered connection there might be between the Armenians and the Southern Pacific Company, though, on second thought, I see nothing in the charter of the "blue grass monopoly"—I believe they call it—which would prevent the corporation from building a railroad in Armenia. For that matter there is nothing in the charter of the Southern Pacific Company of Kentucky which would prevent it from building an exclusive line to the moon. But that is deviating from the subject. The Armenians? I know them very well. But whether the brigandage in the Sultan's Asiatic

dominions is as serious as has been reported in the papers I am inclined to doubt. Those orientals are great liars.

"'The Armenians are astute, industrious and clever people. Some of them force their way into prominent positions. When I was in Egypt, Nubar Pasha, the Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs, was the ablest statesman in the country. He was an Armenian. The Armenians are always engaged in the profitable occupation of pushing themselves to the front when not oppressed by the strong hand of Turkish despotism. The Armenians have the disadvantage of finding themselves oppressed by a people whose religion condones the outrages of which they are guilty. It is not difficult for a sensible man of any faith to choose between the religion of the Armenians and that of the Turks. The Armenians are Christians. The Turks follow the teachings of Mahomet, and have inherited the cruel and barbarous natures of the men who reduced Syria and Egypt with the sword, and chanted that inspiring war cry over the bodies of their butchered Christian victims, "Allah is Allah and Mahomet is his prophet." The Turks are a semi-barbarous people. The hordes of Islam cannot be anything else. Their religious teachings will not permit it. That is what makes the Turk such a good soldier. He places no value on human life. His uppermost ambition is to die fighting the dogs of Christians, for he knows that when his soul leaves his body to ascend to heaven he will be greeted by seventy beautiful houris. I understand that the meanest believer is greeted by seventy houris when he goes to heaven. So the Moslem Turks fight as much with the hope of being killed as with the hope of killing some one else, and with such foes to oppress the Armenians it is not in the least surprising that their pathway in life is not strewn with Maréchal Niels.'

"Sir Charles Rivers Wilson says that he has followed the accounts of the recent outrages in Armenia, but from what he knows of the situation he is inclined to the belief that they are only an exaggeration of what has been going

on for years. There is absolutely nothing to say in favor of the official Turk, he says. He is the unspeakable Turk that the world reads about. The Government is organised brigandage. From top to bottom the system puts a premium on deception, intrigue, theft, and violence. A demigod would be ruined in a week amid such surroundings. . . . The Armenian question is in many respects the Semitic question over again. The Turks are not modern. They do not fit into the present industrial age, and there is the more reason for their persecution of the less populous Armenians.

" 'I have noticed,' continued Sir Rivers Wilson, 'that an inquiry into the Armenian outrages is to be undertaken under the strict supervision of the powers, that is England, France and Russia, for they are the powers most interested. It ought to be a profitable undertaking. If it results in a restriction of the abuses of the Turks it will be a good thing for humanity. I am almost inclined to think, however, that the Turkish temperament and the Moslem faith will have to undergo a radical change before the barbarous cruelties which the Armenians are made to suffer can be suppressed.' "

When I was in San Francisco General Booth of the Salvation Army had just arrived there to conduct a big recruiting campaign, and I was much amused to see in huge letters on the newspaper placards all over the town the announcement, "Great Boom in Souls!"

After a short visit to the north of California I returned to the west. Stopping on the way at Sacramento and Salt Lake City I went to New York, and then to Washington. During this time Mr. Huntington had been promoting legislation in Congress for the adjustment of the indebtedness of the Central Pacific Railway to the Government, and

in the interest of the bondholders I appeared before a committee of the Senate, to whom the bill was referred. The Chairman of the Committee was Senator Brice. He and his colleagues listened with great courtesy to the statement I made to them, which set forth the grievances of the English bondholders and their special claim for consideration from the Government, but I am sorry to say that neither my statement nor the influence of Mr. Huntington was sufficiently powerful to secure the passage of the bill through Congress. I had the opportunity in connection with this business of making the acquaintance of Mr. Olney, the Attorney-General, one of the best of the representative public men that I have ever met in the United States. An orator, a scholar, highly intellectual and of most delightful manners, he is popular alike in his native state of Vermont and throughout the country. I had also the privilege of meeting President Cleveland, and had a good deal of conversation with him; he made a strong and very favourable impression on me. It is a curious fact that these two men whose abilities were of such a high order, and who appeared to my superficial observation to entertain such a sympathetic feeling towards England, should, a very few weeks afterwards, have been the authors of the famous Venezuelan dispatch which almost brought about a rupture between England and America.

I remained nearly a month at Washington, a guest at the British Embassy. Nothing could have exceeded the kindness and hospitality of Sir Julian Pauncefote and his family; they made me feel completely at home, and introduced me to all the most

agreeable houses in Washington. I suppose there never was an Embassy so popular and generally liked as theirs, and so much regretted when their term came to an end. Sir Julian himself possessed all the attributes for ensuring success as an ambassador to the United States; to an unusually handsome presence he united most courteous manners, great decision of character, and, what was particularly useful out there, the training of a lawyer.

The negotiations between Mr. Huntington and the Government having fallen through, it only remained for me to come to an understanding with the former as to the concessions which he might be able to make to the bondholders, whom I represented. For this purpose I returned to New York and took up the matter again with him. When, after urging the claims of my clients with all the persistency in my power, I pressed him for a decision, I found more reluctance on his part than I had anticipated from our earlier conversations. I pointed out to him that his attitude hitherto towards the bondholders was very severely criticised in London and had considerably injured his credit there, and were I to return without bringing with me some prospects of relief to them, the effect would be to damage his reputation still more materially, and it might even close the markets against him. Whereas if I were able to bring home a favourable report, it might be within my power to remove existing prejudices against him. Finding him still hesitating I announced my intention of sailing the following week. He said he would come and say

good-bye to me on board the steamer and would then tell me what his intentions were.

On the appointed day I was on board an hour or two before the steamer was due to start, awaiting the arrival of my friend Mr. Huntington. Time passed; the decks were cleared of the passengers' friends; no Mr. Huntington! From being impatient I gradually became extremely angry. The boat was to sail at 12 o'clock and at 11.30 he had not appeared. At 11.45 the last clearance of the deck was being made. I called my secretary, Pascoe Grenfell, who was remaining in New York, and dictated a short and severe message which I desired him to deliver immediately to Mr. Huntington. Just then the burly figure of the great railway magnate appeared at the foot of the gangway and advanced deliberately towards me as if time were no object. In a few brief sentences he stated his ultimatum, which to my great relief was as satisfactory as I could possibly have expected. There was no time for more. He retired with the same deliberation as he had come, the gangway was withdrawn, and within less than five minutes we were off. On arrival in London I summoned a meeting of the bondholders and made my statement to them. It was generally accepted with approval, and so terminated my mission.

From the *New York Herald*, December 16th, 1894.

"SIR C. R. WILSON, FINANCIAL GIANT.

"The First Visit of One of the Most Renowned English Financiers to America—Impressions of New York.

"For the last ten days or so New York has been entertaining unawares a financial angel of the very first

magnitude, in the person of Sir Charles Rivers Wilson, Knight of St. Michael and St. George, and Companion of the Bath, etc.

Looking after Millions.

"Although the public generally may not know of the presence of this knight of finance, the magnates of the New York banking and railway world are all aware of it. Indeed ever since his arrival, Sir Rivers has assumed the habits of the ordinary business man, and goes down town every morning to spend the business hours in consultation with Messrs. Pierpoint Morgan, C. P. Huntington, General T. H. Hubbard, H. W. Cannon, James Speyer, etc., while in social intercourse he has met Senator Brice, General Samuel Thomas, Mr. George F. Baker, Mr. Tappen, President Brayton Ives, Mr. Kennedy Tod and many others. As is already known Sir Rivers is over here as the champion and representative of the European stockholders of the Central Pacific Railroad, having in charge the interests of some $52,000,000 belonging to these worthy and confiding investors in American securities. This vast sum, however, does not mean anything to Sir Rivers. He is in the habit of dealing with money in sums so large that the bare mention of them is calculated to make the head of the ordinary man ache. As Comptroller-General of the British National Debt—an office which he has held since 1873 and which he only resigned last month—Sir Rivers has had charge of funds amounting to the stupendous total of between two hundred and thirty to two hundred and forty million pounds sterling. The income of this vast sum amounts to some fifteen millions of pounds sterling, all of which it was part of the duties of his office to invest. It will be realised, therefore, that it is not the amount of the interests which have been confided to his care which troubles him.

His Personal Characteristics.

"In appearance Sir Rivers is very much like the Marquis of Dufferin, both in form and feature. He is thin and tall, and might be a man of some fifty-five years of age. His hair has not yet turned, although his whiskers and moustache are quite grizzled. He has a most amiable, indeed a winning face, with a decidedly humorous twinkle of the eyes, but all the same there are certain ominous lines about the mouth which would suggest that this same kind face can be very hard and firm at times, and that it can be so probably no one knows better than His Highness, Ismaïl Pasha. Sir Rivers was brought up in that nursery of good breeding and repose of manner, namely the Treasury Department of the Government, and he shows it in every move. His manner is full of subdued bonhomie, with a distinct touch of a Chesterfieldian politeness, and his method of speech is slightly of the Parliamentary order, with the halting 'er' of the public speaker, and his voice is very clear and penetrating. Sir Rivers is above all things a diplomat, and shows it in a thousand different ways. Whether speaking of men or places, he always conveys the idea that he knows a great deal more of the subject than he is saying, and this gives him a suggestion of reserved power, with a suspicion of the iron hand in the velvet glove. As regards his dress, Sir Rivers is a bit of a dandy, but only to the extent that after leaving him no one could recall one prominent feature of his attire.

In Egyptian Finance.

"It is, of course, with Egypt that the name of Sir Charles Rivers Wilson must be always associated. One circumstance stands out in this connection which speaks for itself. When he first went out to Egypt in 1876 as the representative of the British Government, the country was practically bankrupt, and the 77 unified bonds were quoted at 23. To-day, after various conversions, these same

unified bonds, the interest on which has been scaled down in the meantime to 4 per cent., stand at about 103. To enter into the history of his Egyptian career would be impossible within the limits of this article, but the document which has passed into history is the report of the Commission d'Enquête of which he was president in succession to the late Ferdinand de Lesseps, which had for a result the practical recovery of 450,000 acres of the most fertile land in Egypt, which had been "annexed" by Ismaïl Pasha, and the placing of the finances and taxation on a basis of prosperity of which the wretched and downtrodden fellaheen had never dreamed or supposed possible. Another historic episode in Sir Rivers' Egyptian career was when he threatened to adjourn the conference and withdraw. He went to the Palace to make his adieux to the Khedive, who, after mumbling out an incoherent speech, placed in his hands a document which meant the complete surrender of his authority, accepting a constitutional government and placing himself entirely in the hands of England, France and Italy. Not the least of Sir Rivers' triumph in this connection is the fact that it was his personal influence which induced the Rothschilds to float a loan of eight and a half millions sterling on the security of the lands which he had compelled Ismaïl to disgorge.

Admires de Lesseps.

"On the subject of Ferdinand de Lesseps, Sir Rivers is very eloquent. He had been a colleague of 'the great Frenchman,' and has nothing but admiration for him. He claims that De Lesseps should not be judged by the standard of ordinary men, and pays high tribute to his generous nature, broad views and enormous mental and physical activity. The manner in which he approached England when Lord Palmerston was Prime Minister—the bitterest enemy of his great scheme—after he had won his fight, commends him to the liveliest recognition. He knew that once cut the best and largest customers the

canal would have—they number about eighty per cent. of the whole—would be Englishmen, and so he approached them in the most liberal spirit and made them concessions which earned for him the odium of his fellow countrymen to an almost malignant extent. 'When I think,' says Sir Rivers, 'that this man, who was no engineer, no financier and an unsuccessful diplomatist, achieved a scheme which beat the great Napoleon himself, I am lost in admiration.'

On the Brussels Conference.

"One other episode in the career of this remarkable man was his attitude at the Brussels Monetary Conference, at which he represented the English Government. He is credited with having broken it up, which is true in so far that without the concurrence of Great Britain nothing could be achieved and Sir Rivers was not prepared to recommend the course to his government that could have been accepted by the conference. He pays very high tribute to the American delegates, Senators Allison and Jones, and Messrs. McCreary, H. W. Cameron, Leech, and Professor Andrews. These gentlemen went out of their way to make themselves agreeable to every one, but, of course, they could only carry out their instructions, and they were much hampered by the incident of the change of the home government during the progress of the congress.

Views of New York.

"Sir Rivers was found in his private sitting-room attached to his suite of rooms at the Hotel Victoria, and in reply to the inquiry of a *Herald* representative he said he had been in the country for too short a time to form any opinion excepting so far as his personal experiences in regard to his comfort were concerned. 'You came over on the *Majestic*, I believe?' 'Yes, I could not wait for the American liner on which Sir Julian Pauncefote

travelled. I am very glad, however, to see a healthy competition on the part of America in the carrying and passenger trade, and I have wondered why it did not come sooner. I am old enough to remember the competition between the Collins and Cunard lines years ago.' 'But I thought this was your first visit to America, Sir Rivers?' 'So it is, I am ashamed to say. Every man should see this great country, but I remember the competition I refer to, as I used to be in communication with old Mr. Samuel Cunard in my official capacity.' 'And what has particularly struck you about our city?' 'In the first place the cab charges are enormous, and the means of communication appear to me very limited. The hotels are truly magnificent, but it seems to me that there might be some improvements in your pavements. The other day I returned from down town on a street car, and occupied the front seat, and I thought Broadway was one of the most picturesque and artistic streets I had ever seen. The long vista of buildings cutting the skyline in your clear atmosphere made a beautiful picture. Then again the Brooklyn bridge gave me immense pleasure. It is a truly gorgeous view. Another thing that struck me is the great civility one meets everywhere from strangers. If it is not impertinent to say so it strikes me all the more as one does not—perhaps wrongly—associate such a state of things in connection with democratic institutions.'

Likes American Dishes.

"'Have you received much hospitality during your stay?' I asked. 'Enormous, but I am far too much prejudiced in favour of everything American to be able to discuss it. Your clubs are delightful. I should class them as magnificent, comfortable and cosey. By-the-bye I have arrived at that age when I am a bit of an epicure, and I cannot pay too high a tribute to your American table. I know Paris intimately and there is nothing left there to compare to Delmonico. Indeed, were I not one of the founders

of the Amphitryon in London, I should be inclined to say that Delmonico's is the best cuisine I have ever encountered. I am also agreeably surprised in regard to champagne. I was warned I should find it very sweet. I find, however, quite the reverse. While on this subject I must pay a compliment to your terrapin and oyster crabs, and I must also make my compliments to the Lawyers' Club, which finds it possible to vary the cooking of eggs every day in the year—it is stupendous.'

"'Have you been to any of our theatres yet?' 'Yes, indeed! First and foremost to your Metropolitan Opera, which is superb and I am particularly impressed by the arrangement of the boxes, which permits of the seeing to the best advantage the fashion and beauty of New York. They are not cooped up in their boxes as with us. I also saw some admirable acting at the Empire Theatre, and I think the general arrangements of your theatres in regard to decoration and seating accommodation most perfect.' 'And now, Sir Rivers, have you anything to say about the particular mission which brings you over here?' 'I can only say that I am devoting all my time to acquiring as much knowledge as I can obtain about the Pacific Railroad question and the Central Pacific in particular. I am starting on Tuesday for a tour of the system, and I must ask you to excuse my saying anything more on the subject till my return.'"

[Note.—This article was sent to me from America in 1894 by Sir Rivers Wilson, and having come across it again since his death I feel justified in inserting it here, as it gives such an excellent description of him, and of how he struck the Americans.—Ed.]

CHAPTER XXV

PRESIDENCY OF THE GRAND TRUNK RAILWAY

1895–1909

Dissatisfaction of shareholders—My nomination—Joseph Price—Visit to Canada—Re-organisation of Staff—Mr. Hays—Grand Trunk Pacific Railway—Winnipeg—Last trip to Canada—Prince Rupert—Oriental labour—My last General Meeting—Rise in Stocks.

THE affairs of the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada, and its financial position, had fallen in 1895 to a somewhat low ebb. A considerable amount of dissatisfaction existed among the shareholders, and a movement was set on foot for the removal of the President of the company, Sir Henry Tyler. He had occupied his position for a good many years and had worked most laboriously in the interests of the company, and it cannot fairly be said that the falling off in its prosperity was attributable to him only: whatever responsibility he may have incurred must have been shared by the Board. However, shareholders are as a rule very obstinate, and not always fair when they see revenues falling and their dividends diminishing, and in this case they willingly followed the advice of a special committee of inquiry which recommended the removal of their President. A hostile vote against him was carried in General Meeting, and my name being proposed as his

successor, was unanimously adopted by the shareholders. The leader in this movement and my proposer for the Presidentship was Mr. Joseph Price, who had taken a prominent part in the promotion of my mission to inquire into the affairs of the Central Pacific Company. Mr. Price was a member of the Grand Trunk Board, and had strongly disapproved of Sir Henry Tyler's policy. Inexperienced as I then was in general administrative railway questions, I was well pleased, and very fortunate, in being able to welcome Mr. Price as Vice-President of the company. He was thoroughly acquainted with all matters pertaining to railway management, and had himself occupied various positions on the Grand Trunk Railway, so that he was not only a good all-round railway man, but brought to my assistance a special knowledge of the Grand Trunk Railway itself. In addition to his professional qualities Mr. Price had a most genial and agreeable personality and I had cause to be grateful to him for the cordial and loyal help he rendered to me. His death in 1905 was a great loss.

My first object was naturally to visit and make myself personally acquainted with the Grand Trunk Railway system, and for this purpose I lost no time in proceeding to Canada, accompanied by Mr. Price. The general manager of the railway was Mr. Sargeant, who had held the post for some years. He had come from England, where he had gained creditable experience as a railway administrator. I soon found how different American railway methods were from those of this country, and that Mr. Sargeant, with all his ability and knowledge, was hardly

adapted to the position which he occupied in Canada and America. The same unsuitability applied to some of the heads of the departments under him; in short the administration had become sluggish, and unfit to compete on equal terms with the go-ahead methods of its American and Canadian rivals. Having decided then that a drastic change was necessary in the composition of the staff, the first step was the selection of a new general manager, who, Mr. Price and I agreed, should be chosen from among the American railway officials. It should be borne in mind that though a Canadian undertaking, a large portion of the Grand Trunk Railway passes through American territory, and is subject to American jurisdiction. We proceeded to New York and put ourselves in communication with the leading railway and other business authorities, and after many inquiries and much consideration our choice fell upon Mr. Charles M. Hays, the general manager of the Wabash, one of the railways under the control of Mr. Gould. Mr. Hays accepted the appointment, which eventually turned out so fortunate for the Grand Trunk Company. He was not so well known as he afterwards became, but even then I remember Mr. Pierpont Morgan congratulating me on the choice which we had made, adding that in his opinion Mr. Hays was the best railroad man in the United States. Mr. Sargeant generously acquiesced in the action which we thought it our duty to take, and I believe he was not sorry for the opportunity of returning to England. He gladly accepted a directorship on the Board of the company in London, on which he continued to render useful service until his death a few

years later. His retirement was followed by that of other members of the staff, whose places were filled by men known to Mr. Hays, with up-to-date experience. From this new departure may be said to date the era of prosperity of the company, which continued, I am happy to remember, to increase year by year during the whole period of my Presidentship.

The first general meeting over which I presided was held on the 30th October, 1895, shortly after our return from America. I gave an account of our recent visit to Canada, and indicated in general terms the future policy of the company, and the new Board received a kindly and encouraging reception from the shareholders.

The management of the Grand Trunk Company presented some anomalous conditions. It may appear at first sight singular that a Board of Directors in London should pretend to administer the affairs of an undertaking at a distance of over 3000 miles: affairs of detail and complexity which could only be properly managed on the spot. A contrast has been drawn between the Grand Trunk Railway, and its rival the Canadian Pacific Railway, whose Board is resident in Montreal, and the position has been frequently criticised and much misunderstood. The reason lies in the fact that nearly the whole of the large capital of the Grand Trunk Company, which at that period amounted to no less than £65,000,000, was held in this country, with the exception of a small portion held in Germany and an entirely insignificant proportion in Canada. It is evident, therefore, that a Canadian Board, uncontrolled by local shareholders, and exposed to pressure to spend from the public, and

even from the Government, would have little or no interest in the financial success of the company. This difficulty of administration could only be overcome by the careful selection of officers in whom complete reliance could be placed, by constant vigilance from London headquarters, and by frequent visits from representatives of the Board; and on the whole I think the system has worked satisfactorily.

From 1895 onwards I visited Canada once a year, or oftener, accompanied by my wife, and I was by letter and cable in almost daily communication with the general manager, who, moreover, made ample and detailed reports by every mail. The most important event connected with my Presidentship was the conception and partial construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, as the auxiliary and close ally of the parent company, with the assistance and encouragement of the Canadian Government. The idea as first contemplated was to open up railway communication in connection with the Grand Trunk system to the Pacific. In the course of negotiations it developed into a still larger scheme of a continued line of communication from the Atlantic to the Pacific. This extension of the original plan emanated from the Government of Canada, who considered that the opportunity had arrived for the construction of a new transcontinental line through Canadian territory from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The idea eventually adopted was that while the line should be constructed and worked as a complete unity, the portion westward from Winnipeg should be the property of the Grand Trunk Railway working by means of a separate corporation (the Grand Trunk Pacific), the shares of

which would belong to the Grand Trunk shareholders; while the eastern portion from Winnipeg to New Brunswick was to be built by, and at the expense of, the Canadian Government, who would lease it to the Grand Trunk Railway when finished. Certain financial assistance in the way of subsidies and guarantees was to be accorded to the Grand Trunk Pacific Corporation by the Government. It was not without considerable trouble, and after meeting with much party opposition, that Sir Wilfrid Laurier was able to carry his scheme in the Dominion Parliament.

I first presented the proposed new policy to the shareholders at the General Meeting in April, 1903, and in March, 1904, I had to lay before them the complete and enlarged scheme. Although a certain amount of opposition was expressed, I had on the whole not much difficulty in carrying the necessary resolution; in fact, during the whole course of these transactions Mr. Hays and I were well supported by the Board, with the exception of one somewhat timid member who resigned his seat on account of the increased liabilities which he was apprehensive would be incurred by the shareholders.

In the interval between these meetings, namely in the summer of 1903, I visited Winnipeg with two of my colleagues, in order to become acquainted with its leading personages, as well as with the general conditions relating to that important centre and the surrounding country. In those days the Canadian Pacific Railway held practically the entire control of railway communication in the western provinces of Canada. This monopoly gave them a position of

great authority, the commercial community especially being more or less at their mercy in the absence of all competition as to accommodation and rates. It was natural that a new and rival undertaking should receive encouragement from the inhabitants, and the rumour of our proposed intentions having preceded us, my presence in the city created the greatest interest. I received many visits from prominent citizens who expressed the deepest anxiety and hope that the Grand Trunk would indeed push its lines into Manitoba and the other western provinces, but the influence of the Canadian Pacific was so great, and the fear of offending it in case nothing should come of our projects was so strong, that these visits were paid to me on the quiet, and very often by night. The day before leaving Winnipeg I was invited to a banquet presided over, if I remember rightly, by the President of the Board of Trade. In proposing my health he eulogised at great length the merits and services of the Canadian Pacific Railway, alluding slightly, if at all, to any possible competition on the part of my company. Now this same gentleman had previously complained bitterly to me of the tyranny of the Canadian Pacific, expressing his earnest hope that the Grand Trunk would come to the rescue of the Western community! The representative at Winnipeg of the Canadian Pacific Railway was Mr. Whyte, who was a very able and popular man, and had, like many other of its high officials, begun his railway life on the Grand Trunk.

The financing of this great new undertaking was a matter of much anxiety to the Board of the Grand Trunk, but the necessary funds were raised on good

terms and without serious difficulty. During my constant visits to Canada I was in close communication with Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his colleagues, who supported our joint scheme with almost as much energy as preceding conservative governments had supported the creation and development of the Canadian Pacific Railway, although I am bound to say we failed to secure from them the same material assistance, in the form of enormous land grants, which has been one of the main causes of the prosperity of that corporation.

I held the office of President of the Grand Trunk Railway till January 1st, 1910. My last visit to Canada in the summer and autumn of 1909, which covered some 15,000 miles, was one of peculiar interest, my principal object being an examination of the position and prospects of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway. I went straight through to Chicago over the Grand Trunk lines, and thence proceeded on United States territory to the Pacific coast, thus obtaining the opportunity of contrasting the conditions of the North-West Territory of the United States with those of the provinces on the Canadian side of the line which I was afterwards to visit. Apart from the extraordinary development of the American cities, St. Paul, Minneapolis, Spokane and Seattle, I found a comparison of the fertility of the lands of Minnesota, North Dakota, Montana and Washington with those of the Canadian provinces to their north to be undoubtedly in favour of the latter. The Northern Pacific Railway, over which I travelled, passes through hundreds of miles of ranch country parched from want of water. Even in the agricultural

tracts the want of irrigation was keenly felt, and was causing large numbers of farmers to cross the border in order to transfer their capital, their experience, and their labour, to the acquisition and cultivation of the more fertile lands of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. Apprehension has been sometimes expressed lest this large migration of American citizens into Western Canada may have the effect of what is called "Americanising" that portion of the Dominion, and thereby weakening the existing ties which bind it to the mother country. I do not share these apprehensions; on the contrary, I believe that this class of immigrant will rapidly develop into an excellent and loyal Canadian. Many of these farmers may themselves be somewhat recent arrivals from Europe, and they will soon adapt themselves to their new surroundings and appreciate the freedom and the opportunities afforded by the Government under which they have placed themselves. I was told (1914) on good authority that a considerable proportion of the troops in the Canadian contingent who have voluntarily offered their services for the defence of the Empire, and are fighting side by side with the British troops in France and Belgium, are recruited from this very class of the West Canadian population.

My last visit to the Pacific coast had been in 1896. I had married in the winter of 1895 the Honourable Violet Mostyn, a sister of Lord Vaux of Harrowden, and in the spring of 1896 we went for a honeymoon trip across the continent to Vancouver by the Canadian Pacific Railway, in our private car, the Violet, named after my wife and

built in our own workshops at Montreal. We travelled at our leisure and had a delightful journey, stopping off at many beautiful spots and occasionally having a day's fishing on one of the lakes. The whole tour had been mapped out and arranged for us by Sir William Van Horne, the President of the Canadian Pacific, who had given instructions to his officials to look after us on the road, and to do all they could to make our stay in various places as pleasant as possible. In the short interval of thirteen years which had elapsed since then, the progress in population, in building, and in commercial activity which had been accomplished was most striking.

Leaving Seattle after a few days we crossed over to Vancouver Island, and subsequently to Prince Rupert, the projected terminus of our new railroad. Victoria, which I remembered as a sort of sleepy hollow, a pleasant residence, like Cheltenham, for retired officials, had become a live and active city, being the seat of the Government of the Province of British Columbia; with an excellent climate and attractive and picturesque surroundings it has now become an important social centre. Its parliament and other public buildings have great architectural merit, and the fine new hotel which is the property of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and under the direction of an English manager, is one of the best in Canada. The growth of Vancouver City where we next touched was even more remarkable; after San Francisco it is, with the possible exception of Seattle, the most flourishing and progressive city of the Pacific Coast of North America. But to me the most interesting point visited was Prince Rupert,

which is some five hundred miles north of Vancouver. The navigation along the coast line between these two places is not unattended with danger; indeed, on our return voyage, we came across an unfortunate steamer which had been wrecked the day before in the narrow waterway, and we rescued the passengers and crew and took them down to Vancouver.

The discovery of the island and harbour to which the name of Prince Rupert was afterwards given, was the happy result of the efforts of the explorers sent out on behalf of the Grand Trunk Pacific Company. In earlier days when the Canadian Pacific were in the same manner seeking for an outlet on the Pacific, I believe it is the case that they passed over this particular site in consequence of an error in the Admiralty chart, which indicated an island lying across the front of the harbour and presenting an insuperable obstacle. As a matter of fact the harbour was found to be one of the safest and most commodious along the whole of the coast, and there can be little doubt that it will one day rival any of the other Pacific ports. The scenery is of surpassing beauty, especially along the Skeena river, which flows into the sea a few miles below Prince Rupert. We ascended this river for over a hundred miles and saw gangs of men constructing the line along the right bank. Many of them belonged to the curious sect of the Doukhobors, but we heard that they made excellent workmen. One of the chief sources of wealth in this district will undoubtedly be the fisheries; the sea and the river teem with fish of all description, and the halibut industry is already carried on on an extensive scale. Lord Grey, the Governor-General

of Canada, who was making a tour through Western Canada, came down from the Yukon to meet me at Prince Rupert, where we were entertained at a banquet by the leading citizens of a town, on the site of which but a few years before no human foot had probably ever trod. The whole area was now surveyed and laid out in building plots, which were being rapidly taken up by an increasing community. At this banquet the usual enthusiastic speeches were made, describing the future glories of the new city, which were eventually to eclipse those of any other city on the Pacific. These local enthusiasms are very characteristic of the early settlers in the Western Countries, and although they may cause the traveller to smile they are really indicative of a healthy and virile energy on the part of these earnest pioneers. When a few days afterwards we were travelling over the recently completed section of eight hundred miles between Edmonton and Winnipeg, we found, at many of the little stations where we stopped off, the nucleus of a town, with its churches of more than one denomination, its schoolhouse, and its hotel. I was usually waited on by a deputation, and the conversation might take this form: I, "What is your population at the present moment?" Leading prominent citizen, "Well, sir, our population to-day is (say) 342"; then, seeing a semblance of a smile on my face he would hasten to add, "but, sir, last May it was only 150!" I believe this was about the size of the City of Rivers, which the company had done me the honour of naming after me. As regards Prince Rupert there can be no question of the greatness of its future destiny. The advantage of its fine harbour

will certainly attract a large amount of shipping for traffic with China and Japan, and it is also the intention of the Grand Trunk Pacific Company to construct and run a fleet of powerful steamers for this service, the distance being substantially less than by the southern ports.

Before leaving British Columbia I had an interview with Mr. McBride, the Premier, upon the question of the introduction of Oriental labour, without which our engineers advised that the completion of the extreme western section of our line was absolutely impossible within the time agreed upon by the Government. I pointed out to him that the popular opposition to the employment of Chinese or Japanese labour, under even the most careful conditions and restrictions, proceeds from the ignorance and prejudice of the lowest class of voter, and is contrary to the real interest of the Province, to whose advantage it was that the railways in course of construction should be completed as soon as possible. I undertook that the railway company should enter into any reasonable agreement: that priority should be given to white labour, and that no displacement of it should be allowed; and that finally on the completion of the work all the Orientals should be expatriated. I am not quite sure what Mr. McBride's real view may have been, but he was evidently governed by political necessities, and tried to throw the responsibility on the Dominion Government. I spoke to Sir Wilfrid Laurier on the subject when I reached Ottawa, but he took up the same attitude, and referred me back to Mr. McBride, so we got no further in the matter.

I shall never forget the impression made upon me by the aspect of the country traversed by the new line from Edmonton to Winnipeg, remembering that but a very few years before it had been one vast and desolate prairie, I now saw, for hundreds of miles and as far as the eye could stretch, hundreds and thousands of acres under cultivation, and the harvest in process of being gathered. The landscape was dotted with small farms, and prosperous little towns were springing up along the line, while numberless elevators for the storage and transfer of wheat to the trains had already been erected.

On our way east we stayed for a day or two at Winnipeg, which is fast taking its place as one of the great cities of the northern continent. Fort Garry, only the other day an outpost of the Hudson Bay Company and the objective of Sir Garnet Wolseley's Red River Expedition, has already a very large population, with stately public buildings and beautiful private residences standing in their own gardens, and a social life which might rival that of many European cities. While there we were very kindly entertained by Sir Daniel Macmillan, the courteous and popular Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba. Fort William, at the head of Lake Superior, which I next visited, and which is an important point on the railway, has also, on a smaller scale, a prosperous future before it. It is in close proximity to Port Arthur, where the Canadian Pacific Railway has a predominant interest, and it will certainly at no distant period be united to it. A great deal of land has been taken up in the neighbourhood, and numerous thriving farms run back for many miles into the

interior. Situated as they are at the head of the lake navigation, these twin cities occupy an extremely advantageous position as one of the principal outlets for the enormous wheat production of the west. At the completion of our tour we returned to England, as usual through New York.

On taking leave of my shareholders at the last General Meeting over which I presided, on the 21st October, 1909, I briefly reviewed the progress of the company during the term of my administration. I mentioned that the gross receipts of the company had risen from £4,417,000 in 1895 to £8,106,000 in 1908 which was a bad year, and to £9,224,000 in 1907 which was a very good year. In 1895 the proportion of fixed charges to gross receipts was 27·57 per cent. ; in the bad year of 1908 it was 16·49 per cent. ; and in the good year of 1907 it was as low as 14·32 per cent. The value of the company's securities had increased about £20,000,000 sterling. The following table shows the rise in the stocks since I took office in 1895 :—

	1895.	1909.
Ordinary stock	5½	23–24
4 per cent. guaranteed stock	42½	95
3rd preference	12	57
4 per cent. debenture stock	75	101½

and the last-named stock had been much higher.

The results are sufficient answer to those who pressed me when I first joined the company to reconstruct, that is to say, to reduce the capital, thereby sacrificing to a large extent the interest of the holders of the senior securities. Having been called in to assist the company in a great crisis in its

fortunes, I considered it would not be right or honourable to take advantage of the confidence thus reposed in me.

Perhaps I may be permitted to quote the last words of my speech.

"I shall lay down my work with regret, but the regret will be softened and diminished if I may be allowed to indulge in the hope that I may sometimes be remembered as having taken part in the regeneration and development of your company, and especially as an earnest promoter of that great undertaking (the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway), now rapidly approaching completion, which will have so great an influence over the future of our company, and will at the same time contribute in so large a measure to the welfare and prosperity of the Dominion of Canada."

CHAPTER XXVI

SCULPTORS AND PICTURES

Mr. Ayrton—Wellington memorial—Alfred Stevens—Pistrucci and the Mint—Mr. W. H. Hamilton—"The Family of Darius" by Paul Veronese—The Peel collection—The Blenheim pictures.

When Mr. Gladstone formed his Government in 1868 Mr. Ayrton was appointed Secretary to the Treasury. He had acquired a certain reputation in the House of Commons as an advocate of economy and a critic of the Estimates—qualities which naturally recommended him to the Prime Minister. As an administrator he was a failure, chiefly on account of his personality. He was a most unsympathetic individual, in fact he once said to my uncle, Sir William Stephenson, who asked him where he was going to spend Christmas, "Oh, I'm going nowhere, I really have no human sympathies."

Mr. Ayrton made himself extremely unpopular at the Treasury, not so much on account of his economical attitude in his dealings with individuals and with public departments, as by the manner in which he conveyed his refusals. He soon came into collision with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Lowe, who, wearied by perpetual wrangles caused through him, asked Mr. Gladstone to remove him to some other post; he was transferred accordingly to the Office of Works. A more unfortunate appointment could not have been made. His new office

necessarily brought him into contact with representatives of the liberal professions, and of art, for which he had the most profound contempt. His treatment of Sir Joseph Hooker, the eminent botanist, who was the Director of Kew Gardens and consequently under the Office of Works, is still remembered, and is referred to in Lord Redesdale's interesting "Memoirs," but Sir Joseph Hooker's great position in the world of science enabled him to hold his own against the tyrant. This was not unfortunately the case with another distinguished man and great artist, Alfred Stevens the sculptor.

Some time after the death of the Duke of Wellington a competition was invited for designs for a monument to be erected to his memory in St. Paul's Cathedral. That of Stevens was selected, and the sum of £20,000 was voted by the House of Commons for the construction of the monument. Like many other artists, Stevens was a bad man of business, and the amount at which he had estimated the cost of his work proved entirely inadequate. He was also a slow worker, and was still further delayed by periods of ill-health, and the consequence was that when Ayrton came to the Board of Works, the whole of the money had been spent, though the memorial was very far from completion. Ayrton, without any regard for the susceptibilities of the artist, pressed him to finish it, and refused to ask Parliament for any more money. Finding his demands were unheeded, he sent to Stevens' studio at Haverstock Hill, took possession of the monument which he had enclosed by a palisade, and actually refused the artist any access to it. He then employed a

workman at a few pounds a week to finish the *chef d'œuvre* of one of the greatest sculptors since the renaissance.

The matter was brought before the Chancellor of the Exchequer by James Fergusson, the well-known authority on architecture, who was horrified at what was being done. Mr. Lowe's sympathies were at once enlisted and he went with me to Haverstock Hill, where we saw for ourselves the desecration of the work of art. Parliament was applied to and a new agreement was made with Stevens, who resumed and completed the monument which now stands in St. Paul's Cathedral.

When I say completed, I am not quite correct, as the original design comprised an equestrian figure of the duke on the top of the canopy which surmounted his effigy. There was a good deal of controversy at the time as to the propriety of such a design. The Philistines disapproved of the apparent incongruity, and the old Dean, Milman, gave expression to their view by declaring that he would never allow the erection in his cathedral of a presentation of the great duke "prancing into the building over his own body." Stevens died while the controversy was still proceeding and left the equestrian model in a very crude state. Many years afterwards when Mr. Ayrton, the Dean, and the prejudices which they expressed, had all passed away, the discussion was revived and it was finally decided to have the monument completed according to the original design. The work was finished and is now in place in the site for which it was originally destined, where it is a lasting memorial to the fame of Alfred Stevens.

Soon after Charles Fremantle became Deputy Master of the Mint he and I suggested to Mr. Lowe, who was ex-officio Master of the Mint as Chancellor of the Exchequer, the revival of the beautiful St. George and the Dragon sovereign, the coinage of which had been discontinued for many years. With the approval of H.M. Queen Victoria the suggestion was adopted, and the coin has again come into general circulation. The George and the Dragon coin was designed by Pistrucci, the distinguished sculptor and medallist of the mint, whose work in his own line has never since been equalled. He was also the designer of the Waterloo medal which was struck, but for some reason was never issued. It was a large and very handsome bronze medal, and bore on one side the profile portraits of the four allied sovereigns, the King of England, King of Prussia, Emperor of Austria, and Emperor of Russia.

Pistrucci was skilled in cutting intaglios and was the only man who possessed the knowledge of polishing them, which was supposed to be a lost art. He was once being shown a fine collection of antique gems belonging to a well-known connoisseur when he came across a head of Flora, cut out of white cornelian and set in a ring, which he instantly recognised. "I hope you did not give much for this," he said to his host, "as I made it myself when I was working in Rome many years ago, and still possess the wax head it was modelled from." The collector was furious, declaring that his gem was a genuine antique, and utterly disbelieving the assertion of Pistrucci, who, however, offered to prove it by making another and

still finer Flora from the same model. This he did, but found it impossible to convince the owner of the first Flora that she was indeed his work. The collection of gems was afterwards left to the British Museum, with a statement that the Flora in the ring was a very fine antique. Pistrucci's second Flora was bought by Mr. W. H. Hamilton, the father of my aunt Lady Stephenson, and was, later, acknowledged by the authorities of the museum to be by far the most beautiful of the two, and in all probability made by the same hand as the one in their possession.

Mr. Hamilton was a charming old man and showed me much kindness when I was a boy. He was a trustee of the British Museum, and well-known as the friend and co-operator of Lord Elgin in the removal to it of the famous marbles. He had known Pistrucci when he was Minister at Naples, and it was upon his recommendation that Pistrucci, whom he had introduced into England, received his appointment as medallist to the mint.

I believe that considerable opposition was made to it on account of his being a foreigner. Englishmen were not very friendly to foreigners at the conclusion of the Napoleonic wars, and did not always discriminate between one nationality and another, the French of course being exceedingly unpopular. Pistrucci, shortly after his arrival in London, when walking one day down a street wearing a slouch hat and wrapped in a cloak, was followed by a crowd of urchins who pursued him with cries of "French frog! French frog!" He turned round, took off his hat with a low bow and said: "Shentlemen, I am not one French frog, I am one Italian frog!"

It is somewhat curious that I should have been identified in one way or another with the acquisition of no less than three valuable additions to the National Gallery. In 1857, private information reached the Treasury of an extremely valuable work by Paul Veronese, a master inadequately, if at all, represented in the national collection, which might be obtained by purchase from Count Pisani at Venice. Owing to the objection entertained by the Italian Government against the exportation of works of art, which has since led to severe laws, it was necessary that the negotiations should be conducted with great secrecy. They were undertaken by Sir Charles Eastlake and H.M.'s Consul at Venice, and were brought to a successful conclusion.

In those days a small and entirely inadequate sum was placed upon the yearly estimates and voted by Parliament for the purchase of pictures, so that when any exceptional opportunity of acquiring a really valuable work presented itself, it was necessary to ask for a special grant from the House of Commons. Mr. James Wilson, then Secretary to the Treasury, though a rigid economist and imbued with the true Treasury spirit, was always willing to act generously on occasions such as this, and he delegated to me the carrying out of the arrangements in connection with the purchase of the picture. It was "The Family of Darius in the presence of Alexander," by Paul Veronese; a very fine specimen of the master. The price paid for it was £10,000, which, as I am reminded by my friend Sir Edward Poynter, the Government of that day considered very high. I may mention here that it was also mainly owing to Mr. James Wilson

that Panizzi was enabled to carry out his cherished scheme for building the present magnificent reading-room at the British Museum.

A still more important transaction with which I was connected, was the purchase for the nation of the celebrated Peel collection in 1871. Sir Robert Peel had determined to put up his pictures to auction at Messrs. Christies'. An intimation of his intention was conveyed to Mr. Gladstone, and it was suggested to him that the opportunity should be taken of acquiring the collection. Mr. Lowe agreed with Mr. Gladstone that the purchase should be effected if feasible, and negotiations were entered into with Sir Robert Peel, who very liberally agreed to let the Government take over the pictures at a valuation instead of selling them at Christies'.

The valuation was a matter of delicacy and difficulty, and Mr. Lowe, who was my official chief, desired me to see Mr. Boxall (afterwards Sir William Boxall) the Director of the National Gallery, and, naturally, the adviser of the Government, and to ask him to act. Mr. Boxall agreed to make the valuation, but feeling the great responsibility imposed upon him, insisted that a separate and independent valuation should be intrusted to some other expert. His stipulation was accepted, and a distinguished R.A., Mr. George Richmond, undertook the task. It is a curious circumstance that without any communication between these two experts the figures they respectively arrived at differed only by a small amount. Seventy-seven pictures and eighteen drawings were acquired, and the sum actually paid for them was £75,000. Had the

collection gone to Christies' at the present day, when £100,000 has been known to be paid for a single picture, it is impossible to guess what enormous sum it might not have realised. It was certainly the best bargain of the sort ever made by a government.

The sale of the Blenheim collection in 1884 afforded to the Government another opportunity of acquiring some magnificent works of art. By that time, however, prices had enormously increased. Mr. Alfred de Rothschild, so well known as an art lover and connoisseur, and now one of the Trustees of the National Gallery, and I, were both on intimate terms with the Duke of Marlborough, and he allowed us to act as intermediaries with the Government, and to ascertain whether they would be prepared to purchase a selection of the pictures. Mr. Gladstone was then again Prime Minister, and Mr. Childers Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The National Gallery did not possess any first-class Raffael, and the Trustees were specially anxious to acquire his famous "Madonna degli Ansidei," which was at Blenheim, and also the great equestrian portrait of Charles I. by Vandyke. The Government hesitated for some time, and an appeal to buy the pictures was signed in the House of Commons. At last it was agreed to give the sum of £70,000 for the Raffael. Mr. de Rothschild and I persuaded the Duke of Marlborough to accept it, impressing on him that this high price would not interfere with future sales, but would, on the contrary, establish a high basis, which proved to be the case. The Government also bought the Vandyke for the sum

of £15,000. Sir William Gregory, the principal Trustee of the National Gallery, wrote to Mr. de Rothschild on behalf of the Board to express its warm thanks "for the deep interest you have shown in endeavouring to secure these fine works for the country, and for the trouble you have taken in the matter."

We pressed the Chancellor of the Exchequer very hard, begging him not to miss such a chance of obtaining some other specimens of the greatest masters, but he was afraid to ask the House of Commons for a further grant. The nation thus lost the opportunity of securing some very valuable Rubens, which went, I believe, to Berlin, and the two unrivalled full-length portraits of Rubens' wife and child, which were bought by Baron Alphonse de Rothschild for £55,000 and are now in his gallery in Paris.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE GARRICK CLUB

Its *raison d'être*—Frank Burnand—Habitués of the club—The pictures—Thackeray and Yates—Dickens.

In my later years of leisure I have frequented the Garrick Club, of which I have been a member for nearly sixty years—indeed there is but one member who is my senior, and that only by about two or three months—and I am one of the three trustees of the club. When I first joined, its premises were in King Street, Covent Garden, but it was moved in 1864 to its present site in the adjoining Garrick Street, where a building was specially designed to meet the requirements of the club. The Garrick Club was founded in 1831 for the general patronage of the drama, as stated in the statutes, but it also opens its doors to distinguished members of the other artistic professions, and to those interested in them, and it may fairly be said to have acquired and maintained a reputation in this respect. Without possessing the sterner and more priggish qualities attributed to the Athenæum Club (we have not a single bishop!) on the one hand, or the Bohemianism of, say, the Beefsteak or the Savage Clubs on the other, yet the general atmosphere of the Garrick, and the good fellowship prevailing amongst its members, make it to my mind, the most "clubable" club in London.

I believe that the smoking-room is still popularly supposed to be the resort of the wits, authors, and poets of the present day, as the Covent Garden and St. James's Street Coffee houses were in the days of Queen Anne. Some years ago, however, when the question was raised in committee whether strangers who had dined in the club should be allowed access to the smoking-room afterwards, Frank Burnand, the editor of *Punch*, objected that, "If we do that, they'll find us out!" The objection was considered conclusive.

Amongst the constant habitués of the club during my time were Thackeray, Dickens, and Trollope, littérateurs; O'Neil, Sir John Gilbert, Stanford, and Millais, painters; actors—a host of celebrities—Irving, Johnny Toole, the life and soul of the supper-table on Saturday nights, Squire Bancroft, John Hare, George Alexander, Beerbohm Tree, Gerald du Maurier, Ben Webster, and other rising talent—thus worthily maintaining the traditions of the club and the object of its promoters.

The cardroom and the lounge are the two cheeriest resorts, and have superseded in popularity the old smoking-room. A principal attraction of the club is the extremely interesting collection of pictures, chiefly portraits of members of the dramatic profession, dating from the time of Peg Woffington and David Garrick, of whom there are two or three very good portraits by Zoffany. Amongst the modern pictures Millais' beautiful portrait of Irving, presented to the club by the artist, is most conspicuous; and there are striking likenesses of Squire Bancroft, Toole, and John Hare in his favourite

character in *A quiet rubber*. This picture was presented at a banquet given to Hare by the club, at which I had the honour to preside. In 1908, shortly before his death, a *catalogue raisonné* of the pictures was made by my friend Robert Walters, who was very fond of the Garrick, and had presented to it a curious collection of water-colour portraits of Charles Mathews in his various characters by James Warren Child, the miniature painter.

One of my earliest recollections connected with the Garrick is the historic quarrel between Thackeray and Dickens over the retirement of Edmund Yates. The circumstances as I remember them were these. Edmund Yates was in the habit of meeting Thackeray in the smoking-room. The one was a great literary celebrity—the other a young and almost unknown journalist. Yates was a contributor to a weekly periodical of sketches of public personages of the day. In an unfortunate moment he wrote a description of Thackeray, mentioning certain of his personal peculiarities, such as that his conversation was cynical, and that he had a broken nose. It is well known that Thackeray was particularly sensitive as to his personal appearance, and he took exception to these remarks, which might have been made by anybody who ever came across him, and considered that it was a betrayal of the intimacy which should prevail among members of the club. He brought the matter before the committee, who, most injudiciously to my mind, called upon Yates to apologise. Yates, acting upon the advice of his friends, amongst whom was Charles Dickens, refused to comply with their requisition. Thereupon a general meeting was summoned,

the case was laid before it, and by a majority of votes Yates was expelled from the club. I thought then, and I still think, that very hard measure was dealt him, and I was very sorry that on the day of the meeting I was detained at the Treasury, and unable to record my vote.

It was generally felt that it was hardly generous on the part of such a great and successful man as Thackeray to abuse his influence with the committee to crush a younger man at the commencement of his career. I may also add that Thackeray had the less reason to be sensitive on a question of this sort as he was himself a sinner in the same respect, his somewhat ridiculous character of "Foker" in *Pendennis* having been founded on a well known frequenter of the Garrick with whom he was on terms of intimacy. This circumstance was much commented on at the time of the Yates incident. Dickens spoke warmly on behalf of his friend Yates whom he considered to have been badly treated by Thackeray, and the result was a break of the friendly relations which had for many years existed between these two great men. They were long afterwards brought together again through the kindly offices of Dickens' daughter, Mrs. Perugini.

CHAPTER XXVIII

MY BULLDOGS

Points of the British bulldog—His nervousness—Homing instinct—My favourites, Joey and Kitty.

THE culte of bulldogs is still maintained and has as great a fascination as ever for those who indulge in it. It may be interesting to present-day breeders and to judges at shows to place on record the points and attributes of the real old English stock; they are fully set out in the following transcript of a document in the British Museum :—

"THE BRITISH BULLDOG (*canis pugnax*).

"The British bulldog is a majestic ancient animal, very scarce, much maligned, and, as a rule, very little understood. If treated with kindness, often noticed, and frequently with its master, he is a quiet and tractable dog; but if kept chained up and little noticed, he becomes less docile and sociable, and, if excited and made savage, he is a most dangerous animal. He is generally an excellent guard, an extraordinary waterdog, and very valuable to cross with terriers, hounds, greyhounds, etc., to give them courage and endurance. He is the boldest and most resolute of animals. The gamecock is a courageous bird, but he will only attack his own species; but there is nothing a good bulldog will not attack, and ever brave and unappalled, with matchless courage, he will give up only with life itself. This *noble* dog becomes degenerate

abroad—in truth he is a national animal, and is identified with Old England, and he is a dog of which *Englishmen may be proud.*

Properties of the British Bulldog.

"No. 1. The head should be large and high, that is with elevation about the temples, and deeply sunken between the eyes, which indentation is termed 'the stop.' This 'stop' should extend some distance up the head. The skin of the head should be wrinkled, and the cheeks should extend outwards well beyond the eye. The forehead of the dog should not be prominent, as in the King Charles spaniel, and not too round, or it would be 'apple-headed.' The head of a fine dog, 50 lbs. in weight, should measure round the thickest part about 20 inches.

"No. 2. The eyes should be wide apart, almost black, of moderate size, rather full than otherwise, round, and not deeply set. The line of the eye should be at right angles with the line of the face, and the eyes placed quite in front of the head, as far from the ear and as near the nose as possible.

"No. 3. The ears should be small, thin, and wide apart. They should be either 'rose,' 'button,' or 'tulip.' The rose ear falls backwards, while the ends lap over outwards, exposing part of the inside. The button ear differs from the rose only in falling over forwards, which hides the interior. The tulip ear is nearly erect. These are the only distinct sorts of ear, but there are various grades between them, and sometimes one almost merges into the other, for the dog does not always carry them in the same manner; as for instance the ear which is naturally a rose ear may become almost a tulip ear when the animal is excited.

"No. 4. The nostrils should be wide, and the nose large and almost between the eyes, and black and deep; thus, taking the depth of the nose, and the length from the eye to the end of the nose, the distance ought to be about the same. There should be a well defined line straight up

between the nostrils. The best bred dogs will be liable to flesh or spotted noses; this is a blemish, but no sign of bad breeding; true bred bulldogs will occasionally have flesh-coloured noses.

"No. 5. The muzzle should be broad, deep and short, with the skin deeply wrinkled, and underhung, but not showing the teeth; for if the mouth be even they are termed shark-headed, which is considered a very bad point. The under jaw should be square, and *well* upturned, with plenty of space in a nearly straight line for the small front teeth in the lower jaw between the tusks. This is an important point because it denotes width and squareness of under jaw.

"No. 6. The neck should be moderate in length, thick, and arched at the back, with plenty of loose wrinkled skin about the throat. The ribs should be well rounded and the chest wide, deep and rounded. The tail should be inserted rather low down; thick where it joins the body, long and thin and turned round at the end, in which case it is termed 'ring' or 'tiger' tail, similar to that of the greyhound, but shorter. The perfect tail is shown in the print of Mr. Lovell's 'Ball,' and the tail nearest approaching that is the nearest to perfection. 'The tail thin and taper; curling over the back or hanging down, termed tiger-tailed; rarely erected except when the passions of the animal are aroused.'

"No. 7. The back should be short and arched in the loins, termed roach-backed; wide across the shoulders and narrow across the loins. The roach back is shown in perfection in the print of 'Crib and Rosa.' Rosa's shape is perfect.

"No. 8. The legs. The fore legs should be stout with well-arched calves, bowed outwards, short, and very wide apart. The hind legs should be slightly longer in proportion than the fore legs, so as to elevate the loins. The hocks should approach each other, which involves the stifles being turned outwards, and well rounded, which seems to obstruct the dog's speed in running, but is

C. Rivers Wilson and "Bertha."

admirably adapted to progressive motion when combating on his belly. The feet should be moderately round, not so round as a cat's, nor so long as a hare's feet, and should be well split up between the toes. The fore feet should be straight, and should show the knuckles well. The pasterns should be strong, that the dog may walk well on his toes.

"No. 9. The coat should be fine, short and close. The bulldog has a very peculiar carriage, heavy and rather slow. He rolls very much in his gait; and generally runs rather sideways; his hind legs are seldom lifted very high, so that his hind feet (which like the stifles are turned outwards) appear to skim the ground.

"No. 10. The colour should be salmon, fallow, red, brindled or white, with these colours variously pied. The salmon and fallow, with black muzzles, called 'smuts,' are choice colours. Some greatly admire the white, but a bright salmon with black muzzle would be the choicest of all colours. Black was formerly considered a good colour, but black and tan, and blue, are very bad colours. There is a strong resemblance between a brindled bulldog and a striped hyæna.

"No. 11. Weight. A bulldog seldom weighs more than 60 lbs. If larger he may be suspected of the mastiff cross. On the other hand he ought not to be less than 20 lbs., or he may be suspected of being crossed with the terrier. The large bulldogs are grander and more striking in their proportions than the smaller ones."

I was always very fond of animals, and for some years was much interested in the breeding of the finest strain of English bulldogs. My first venture was with Bertha, a high-class pedigree animal and a very beautiful creature. She was the mother of two or three litters, several of which took prizes at the great shows. I always retained a couple of them as

my personal companions, and they were certainly among the best friends I have ever had. One of the most attractive characteristics of the bulldog is his devotion to his master; he is also docile, affectionate, and as intelligent as most other breeds, with the possible exception of one or two such as the poodle or the fox-terrier. But his qualities generally are much misunderstood, and one of the drawbacks against keeping him as a household pet is his nervousness and susceptibility to a sudden noise or shock. As an instance of this peculiarity I may mention the following incident.

My friend Lord Thring, having asked me to give him one of Bertha's progeny, I selected a very handsome young dog and took him myself down to Egham where Lord Thring resided. I went by a late evening train and asked the guard to take charge of the animal in his van. When we got to Staines, which was the first stop, the guard rushed down the platform shouting "Where is the gentleman who belongs to the dog?" I jumped out of the carriage and into the van, where I found my poor dog screaming piteously and in the highest state of excitement. I wrapped my cloak round my arm and held him as well as I could till we reached Egham station. On arriving I called a fly, and being, I must say, a little bit nervous, as the animal's emotion did not subside, I shut him inside the fly and got up on the box by the driver. My appearance at my friend's house, accompanied by an apparently mad dog, had rather a startling effect.

We put the animal in a loose box where we left him running round and round, burying his head in

the straw, and continuing his deplorable howls. The next day I found him tolerably quiet, and happily he gradually recovered. My explanation of his behaviour is that he had been tied up over the brake and that the noise had occasioned a sort of concussion of the brain, which, added to the confusion and novelty of such a journey, had driven the poor creature almost mad.

Reading Lord Charles Beresford's "Memoirs," in which he mentions the practice of a favourite bulldog of jumping into hansom cabs, I recalled that several of my bulldogs had precisely the same fancy. All round Belgravia, where I was then living, they were known to the cab-drivers, who appeared quite flattered at being engaged, as they frequently were, by my dogs. The dogs would spring into a hansom, jump on to the seat, and expect to be taken for a drive, which was one of their great enjoyments!

The homing instinct was strongly developed in my dogs as in many others. Upon two occasions they found their way back from different parts of London, through labyrinths of streets which were absolutely strange to them. Àpropos of this well-known instinct my father related to me the following story. Travelling in Italy he was detained at Magenta, where the battle had been fought in 1859. At that battle a distinguished French colonel had met his death. The fighting was practically over when the officer in question, having caused a large barn which contained a number of Austrians to be forced open, was fired upon by them and killed. He had been accompanied by a favourite dog which had followed him throughout the campaign. His body

was conveyed to France, and the dog, which refused to leave his master, was allowed to go with it. A public funeral was accorded in Paris, after which the dog could not be found. He turned up a considerable time later at the door of the barn where he had last seen his master alive. He was nearly dead with exhaustion, having traversed the whole of France and crossed the Alps into Lombardy. The circumstance was reported to King Victor Emmanuel, who allowed a small pension for the maintenance of the dog to the farmer to whom the barn belonged. My father went to see the animal, which he found well cared for.

Two of Bertha's offspring, Joey and Kitty, were great pets. They were beautiful specimens of a rather dark fawn colour without any white, a colour which, personally, I preferred to the more ordinary brindle. Kitty showed most extraordinary, and I may add intelligent, courage. After one of her litters she had to be operated on several times by Mr. Rotherham, the well-known veterinary surgeon. After the first occasion when he came to operate on her she seemed to understand that he was trying to relieve her. She welcomed him when he arrived, and of her own accord leapt upon the operating board, gently whimpering when the knife cut into her, while I stroked and tried to encourage her. She did not, however, recover.

There was one occasion, I must say, when Kitty made me rather ashamed of her. We were walking together down Chester Street when she spied a cat lying asleep under a scraper at the top of four or five steps leading to a front door. She left my side and very quietly and undemonstratively walked up the

steps and seized the unsuspecting puss. There was no struggle—one nip at the back of the neck was sufficient—and when the murderous deed had been accomplished she descended in the same quiet manner and rejoined me, licking her lips and looking up apprehensively to see how I would view the occurrence. The whole episode had taken place so noiselessly that no one had noticed what had happened, and I was able to walk away unobserved.

Joey, Kitty's brother, was my special favourite. He was absolutely devoted to me and suffered acutely when we were separated. During one of my absences in Egypt I left him in charge of Mr. Rotherham at a place he had in Paddington. The dog was treated with the greatest kindness and had the run of the grounds. Upon my return after some months I went up to Paddington to bring him home. His joy and emotion on seeing me again were so great that they immediately brought on an attack of jaundice, to which he very nearly succumbed. The next time I went to Egypt Joey again had to be left behind, but my wife, who was very fond of him, kept him with her in our own house in Wilton Street. For the first few days he was very restless, and if ever the door-bell rang about the hour of my usual return home, he would jump up, run to the front door, and look up and down the street. At last one day, after being as usual disappointed, he ran into my room, threw himself down on the rug, and had a fit.

He was a comparatively young dog and had been in perfect health, but from then onwards he went rapidly downhill, and when I came back a few months afterwards I found him lying in his basket,

paralysed, deaf, and blind. I spoke to him and called him by his name, but there was no response; but when I laid my hand on him he started up as if struck by an electric shock, looking wildly round with his poor blind eyes. He had at once recognised the touch and presence of his master. . . . He died quietly in my arms a short time afterwards.

INDEX

Abbas Pasha, 147
Abdin Palace, 116, 124, 127, 150, 187
Adam, Madame Juliette, 230
Adams, Sir F. Ottiwell, K.C.B., 111–113, 227
Alabama claims, 57–60
Alexander, Sir George, 293
Alexandria, 132, 136–139, 150–156, 219
Allfrey, Mr., 5
Alliance Assurance Co., 2
Allison, Senator, 243
Anderson, Sir George, 28
Arabi Pasha, 75, 189
Arbuthnot, George, 28
Armenian question, 254–257
Arnold, Sir Edwin, 20
Attlee, Falconer, 225
Aumale, Duc d', 223
Ayrton, Mr., 283–285

Baker Pasha, 198
Balliol, 14, 17, 19
Bancroft, Sir Squire, 227, 293
Baravelli, Signor, 90, 109, 114, 127
Baring, Capt. E. (Lord Cromer), 90, 108, 109, 113–115, 122, 135, 136, 151, 154, 165–167, 191
Barrot Pasha, 87, 88, 115, 116, 128, 139, 140, 148, 149
Barton, Billy, 17
Bass, Mr., 42
Bath, Marquis of, 8, 9
Baxter, Mr., 236
Beaconsfield, Lord, 150, 151, 155, 160, 247, 248 ; *see* Disraeli.
Beresford, Lord Charles, 301
Bernhardt, M., 243
Bernhardt, Sarah, 230
Berryer, M., 23
Bertie, Lady Feodorowna, 224
Bimetallists, 242–247
Bismarck, Prince, 52
Blades, *see* Calverley.
Blenheim Collection, 290, 291
Blignières, M. de, 90, 109, 114, 134, 136, 147, 151, 165–167, 174–176, 180, 184, 190, 191, 210, 211, 215
Blowitz, M., 76, 111, 228–230
Blum Pasha, 149, 203
Blunt, Lady Anne, 206–208
——, Wilfrid Scawen, 206–208
Boghos Bey, 157, 158
Bonar, Mr., 57–60
Bonnemains, Madame de, 234, 235
Booth, General, 257
Borthwick, Sir Algernon, 242
Boulanger, General, 232–235
Boxall, Mr., 289
Brabazon, 120
Bramston, Sir John, 17
Brassey, Lord, 246
Brice, Senator, 258
Brussels, 243, 245
—— Monetary Conference, 242–247
Bulldogs, 296–304
Buller, Reginald, 17
Burnand, Sir Francis, 293
Burton, Mrs., 119, 120
——, Richard, 119, 120

Caillard, M., 211
Cairo, Chaps. IX to XX
' Caisse de la Dette,' 89, 90
Calverley, 17
Canadian Pacific Railway, 17, 270, 272–277, 280
Capitan Pasha, 97, 98
Cardwell, Mr., 241
Carmichael, Sir T., 219
Cave, Rt. Honble., S., 80, 82, 85, 90–92, 105, 196
Central Pacific Railway, 251–266, 268

Chamberlayne, Mr. E., 28
Chantilly, 223, 224
Chelsea pensioners, 64, 65
Chérif Pasha, 130, 131, 133, 134, 191, 197, 198, 217
Child, James Warren, 294
Childers, Mr., 60, 290, 291
China, Embassy to, 240
Clarke, Lady, 229, 230
—— Sir Campbell, 112, 229, 230
Clay, James, 35, 36, 46
Clémenceau, M., 233
Clermont, General, 227
Cleveland, President, 258
Cobden, Mr., 236, 237
Cockburn, Sir Alexander, 59
Coleridge, 8, 9
Colvin, Sir Aukland, 180, 218
Commercial Treaty, *see* Paris.
Commission on Commerce and Navigation, 231, 236–239
—— of Inquiry, 107–165
—— on International Coinage, 51
—— of Liquidation, 218–220
——, Suez Canal Neutrality, 240
Conference, *see* Brussels and Paris.
Constantinople, 219
Corry, Montague, 30, 33
Cowley, Lord, 223, 224, 226, 227
Crocker, Mr., 252
Cromer, Lord, 108; *see* Baring.
Crowe, Sir J. E., 231, 236
Currie, Bertram, 242, 245

Decazes, Duc, 85, 86
Delane, 40
Delfosse, Maurice, 245
Deputations, 31, 41, 42
Derby, Lord, 20
Desmichels, M., 135-137, 141, 142, 145, 146, 149
Dickens, Charles, 293–295
Dieppe, 5–7
Dilke, Sir Charles, 231, 236, 238
Dillon, Count, 233, 234
'Diplomacy,' 227
Disraeli, Mr., 30–36, 41, 61, 62, 101; *see* "Beaconsfield."
Doukhobors, 277
Dual Control, 103
Dufferin, Lord, 224, 225
Du Maurier, Gerald, 293

Earle, Ralph, 33, 34
Eastlake, Sir Charles, 288
Edward VII., King, 8, 55, 88, 89
Egypt, 70–72, 75–77
——, Chapters IX to XX
Ermoli Bey, 136
Eton, 8–11
Eugénie, Empress, 53, 54, 88, 203
Eyre, Governor, 241

Fazil, Princess Mustapha, 143, 144
Fergusson, James, 285
Finlaysons, 64
Fitzgerald, Sir Gerald, 120, 183, 184, 211
Forster, Mr. W. E., 249
Fort Garry, 280
—— William, 280
Franco-Prussian War, 52, 56, 57, 224, 238
Fremantle, Honble. Sir Charles, 30, 31, 242, 244, 286
Freycinet, M. de, 7, 75, 76, 239

Gabriel, Virginia, 120
Gambetta, M., 72, 75–77, 228
Garrick Club, 292–295
—— David, portraits of, 293
Gérome, 231
Ghezireh Palace, 94, 96, 97
—— Gardens, 116
Ghizeh Palace, 91, 204
Gilbert, Sir John, 293
Gladstone, Mr., 37, 38, 41, 43, 44, 69, 236, 246–250, 283, 289, 290
—— Mrs., 250
Godeau, M., 177
Gordon Pasha, 109, 195–201
Goschen, Mr., 69, 72, 90, 102, 103, 105, 121, 196
——, Lord, 219
Gould, Mr., 269
——, Mr. Gerald, 58

Graham, Dr., 48, 51
Grand Trunk Pacific Rly., 267-282
—— Stocks, 281, 282
Grange, Marquise de la, 25
Granville, Lord, 59, 219, 228, 236, 239, 240
Gregory, Sir William, 290, 291
Grenfell, Pascoe, 260
Grey, Lord, 277
Guichard, M., 79

Haggard, Sir William, 60
Halifax, Lord, 51
Halim Pasha, 140
Hamilton, Mr. G. A., 37, 38
——, Mr. W. H., 287
Hanault, Prince de, 232
Harcourt, Sir William, 242, 244, 246, 248, 252
Hardwicke, Dowager Lady, 224
Hare, Sir John, 293, 294
Hartog, Numa, 45, 46
Hassan Pasha, 96, 189
Hays, Mr. Charles M.; 269, 270, 272
Hayter, Sir William, 27, 30
Henley, Robert, 17
Herbert, Sir Robert, 17
Hesse Darmstadt, 12, 13
Hodgson, Mr. Kirkman, 69
Hooker, Sir Joseph, 284
Hopkins, Mr., 252
Hoskyns, Admiral, 77
Houldsworth, Sir William, 242, 245
Hübner, Baron, 224
Huntington, Mr. C. P., 251-254, 257-260
Hussein Pasha, 103, 120, 123, 146, 148

Ibrahim Pasha, 158
Irving, Sir Henry, 293
Ismaïl Pasha, 54, 70, 71
——, Chapters IX to XIX
Ismaïlia, 71, 72, 117, 118
—— quarter, 204

Jamaica, 241
Jekyll, Col. Sir Herbert, 55
Jenkyns, Dr., 14-16
Jevons, Professor, 43, 44
Jolivet, M., 11
Jones, Mr., of Nevada, 243
Joubert, M., 95, 102, 103, 111
Jowett, Dr., 14, 16, 17

Kennedy, Sir Charles, 236
Khartoum, 200, 201
Khedive, *see* Ismaïl: Tewfik: Saïd, Pashas.
Koenig, Dr., 60
Kremer, Herr von, 90, 109, 114, 151, 154

Lacour, M. Challemel de, 238, 239
Lake, 14
Lambert, M. Léon, 245
Lankester, Henry, 17
La Penna, 132
Larking, Mr., 97-101, 112, 157, 203
Lascelles, Edwin, 17
——, Mr., 167, 169
Laurier, Sir Wilfrid, 272, 274, 279
Lee, Sir Henry Austin, 236, 237, 239
Lemoine, M., 205, 206
Lesseps, Charles de, 74, 77-79, 139, 253
——, Ferdinand de, 70-79, 97, 109, 113-115, 117, 118, 122
——, Madame de, 122
——, Victor de, 71, 137-139
Levi, Mr. Montefiore, 243
Lewis, Sir G. Cornwall, 27, 46
Liquidation, law of, 219-221; *see* Commission.
Liverpool, Lord, 243
Louis Philippe, King, 11
Lowe, Mrs., 40
——, Robert, 38-47, 51, 61, 93, 283, 285, 286, 289
Lubbock, Sir John, 68
Lufti, Omar Pasha, 182
Lyons, Lord, 199, 224, 225, 229
Lytton, Lord, 224, 225

MacMahon, Maréchal, 112, 113
Macmillan, Sir David, 280

McBride, Mr., 279
Magenta, battle of, 301
Malaret, M. de, 130
Marlborough, Duke of, 290
'Marmitons, Maison des,' 204, 205
Match tax, 42, 44
Matthews, Charles, 294
Mehemet Ali, 97–99, 157, 158
Metternich, Prince, 34, 35
Meyer, Arthur, 232, 233
Millais, Sir John, 293
Milman, Dean, 285
Milner, Lord, 108
Moidrey, Baron de, 56, 57
Molesworth, Sir Guildford, 242, 245
Monetary Conferences, *see* Brussels and Paris.
Monson, Sir Edward, 225, 229
Montalembert, Comtesse de, 25
Montbron, Aymer de, 23, 24
——, Comte de, 22, 23
——, Joseph de, 23, 24
Morgan, Mr. Pierpont, 269
Morier, Sir Robert, 240
Mostyn, Hon. Violet, 275
Moubarek, Ali Pasha, 175, 215, 217
Mouffetish, The, 94–97, 217

Napoleon III., Emperor, 48, 53, 55, 224, 230, 236, 237
National Debt Office, 61–69, 251
Native Ministers, 210–218
Nazli Hanem, Princess, 143, 144
New Orleans, 253
Newton, Lord, 224
New York, 252–254, 257, 259, 269, 281
—— —— Herald, 260–266
Ney, Marshal, 25
Northcote, Sir Stafford, 68, 72, 82–85, 124, 129, 146, 149, 155, 173, 174, 192, 209
Northern Pacific Railway, 274
North-west Territory, 274
Norton, Fletcher, 8, 9
—— Norton, George, 9
—— Mrs., 8, 9
Nubar, Madame, 119, 125, 126, 129, 144
Nubar Pasha, 54, 111, 112, 124–126, 132–134, 137, 145–147, 149–155, 157–161, 165, 167, 169–171, 176, 178, 187–191, 209, 210, 213–217, 221, 228, 255

Olney, Mr., 258
O'Neil, 293
Owen, Sir P. Cunliffe, 55

Palmer, 14
Palmerston, Lord, 27, 29, 216
Panama Canal Co., 77–79
Panizzi, 288
Parieu, M. de, 48, 49
Paris, 7, 10, 25, 26, 111–113
—— Commercial Treaty, 236–239
—— Exhibitions, 53–56
—— Monetary Conference, 48–51
—— Revolution (1848), 11
—— Society, 223–235
Pasquier, Duc, 10
Pastré, M., 86, 89
Pauncefote, Lord, 240, 258, 259
Peel, Arthur, 17
——, collection, 289
——, Sir Robert, 248, 249
Persigny, Duchesse de, 205, 206
Perugini, Mrs., 295
Pisani, Count, 288
Pistrucci, 286, 287
Plumtre, Dr., 18
Port Arthur, 280
—— Said, 117, 118
Poynter, Sir Edward, P.R.A., 288
Praslin, Duc de, 10
——, Duchesse de, 10
Pressley, Sir Charles, 248
Price, Mr. Joseph, 268, 269
Primrose, Sir Henry, 112, 118, 136, 143, 153
Prince Imperial, 53
—— Rupert, 276–279

Raffael, "Madonna degli Ansidei," 290
Ramleh, 132; *see* Alexandria.

Ras el tin Palace, 161, 219
Ratib Pasha, 175
Redcliffe, Lord Stratford de, 19
Redesdale, Lord, 35, 284
Report, Preliminary, 151–156, 161–165
Reporters, American, 254, 255
Réville, M., 5, 7
Riaz Pasha, 109, 114, 147, 154, 175, 215, 217
Richelieu, Duc de, 24
Richmond, Mr. George, R.A., 289
Riddell, James, 14
Rivers, City of, 278
Rochechouart, Comte de, 24, 25
——, Comtesse de, 25
——, Julien de, 24, 25, 26
Romaine, 120–122
Rossel, Col., 56, 57
Rotherham, Mr., 302, 303
Rothschild, Messrs., 156, 172–174, 185, 187
——, Alfred de, 52, 242, 243, 290, 291
——, Baron, 51, 87, 89
——, Baroness, 158
——, Baron Alphonse de, 291
—— —— Gustave, 245
——, Baroness Meyer de, 44, 45
——, Loan, 166
Rouher, M., 230, 231, 237
Rubens' portraits, 291

Sagan, Prince de, 232
Saïd Pasha, 147, 175, 202–204
St. Maurice, 205
Salisbury, Lord, 116, 149, 155, 165, 167, 169, 173, 174, 176, 200, 218, 219
San Francisco, 253–257, 276
Sargeant, Mr., 268, 269
Schaeffer, 126, 134, 135
Schneider, 53, 54
Scott, Dr., 16
Shoubra Road, 204
Skeena River, 277
Slade, George, 17
Soudan, 195, 196, 198, 199
Spearman, Sir Alexander, 61, 62
Stamford, Mr., 252
Standen, Mr. E. T., 70
Stanford, 293
Stanley, Lord, 20
Stanton, General Sir Edward, 92, 103
Stephenson, Lady, 287
——, the Misses, 3
——, Charles, 227
——, Sir Benjamin, 3
——, Ernest, 3
——, General Sir Frederick, 4, 200, 201
——, Sir William, 28, 223, 283
Stevens, Alfred, 284, 285
Stocks, Egyptian, 221
——, Grand Trunk, 281, 282
Stoempfli, 58, 59
Stokes, Sir John, 70, 76, 81
Suez Canal, 117, 118, 203
—— —— Co., 70–80, 86, 92, 215, 216, 251

Tantah, 98, 99
Tenterden, Lord, 59
Tewfik, Pasha, 137, 153, 193, 213, 217–219
Thackeray, 12, 293–295
Therapia, 219
Thompson, Sir Henry Meysey, 246
Thring, Lord, 46, 300
Tigrane Bey, 132
Tirard, M., 239
Tollett, 18, 19
Toole, John, 293
Tree, Sir H. Beerbohm, 293
Trevelyan, Sir Charles, 27, 30
Tribunals, International, 159
——, Native, 142, 143
Trollope, Anthony, 241, 293
"Tufts," 19, 20
Tunbridge Wells, 5
Tyler, Sir Henry, 267, 268

Uzès, Duchesse d', 234

Vancouver, 275, 277
—— City, 276
—— Island, 276

Vandyke, "Charles I.," 290
Van Horne, Sir William, 276
Veronese, Paul, "Family of Darius," 288
Vivian, Mr., Chapters XII to XVII
Victor Emmanuel, King, 302
Victoria (B. C.), 276

Waddington, M., 25, 26, 80, 111, 112, 173, 174, 177
Wade, 120
Wake, Drury, 17–19
—— Sir Herewald, 19
Wall, 14
Walsham, Sir John, 240
Walters, Robert, 294
Washington, 253, 257–259
Waterloo medal, 286
Webb, Gabriel, 67, 68
Webster, Ben, 293
Wellington memorial, 284, 285
Westbury, Lord, 16
Weyer, M. Vander, 245
Whyte, Mr., 273
Wilson, Madame Alice, 245, 246
——, Mr. James, 27, 29, 30, 288
——, Col. Samuel, 1
——, Thomas, 2
——, Thomas, & Co., 4
Winnipeg, 271–273, 280
Woffington, Peg, portrait of, 293
Wolseley, Lord, 77, 201, 280
Woolcombe, 14

Yates, Edmund, 294, 295

Zoffany, portraits, 293

THE END

PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED, LONDON AND BECCLES, ENGLAND.

Telegrams :
" Scholarly, Reg. London."
Telephone :
No. 1883 Mayfair.

41 and 43 Maddox Street,
Bond Street, London, W.
September, 1916.

Mr. Edward Arnold's AUTUMN ANNOUNCEMENTS, 1916.

MY OFFICIAL LIFE.

By Sir C. RIVERS WILSON, G.C.M.G.
Edited by E. MacALISTER.

One Volume. With Portraits. Demy 8vo. Cloth. **12s. 6d. net.**

The autobiography of Sir C. Rivers Wilson covers a long period and touches on many interesting historical events. Sir Rivers, who was born in 1831 and died in 1916, passed the greater part of his life in the service of his country. While still a young man at the Treasury, he was for some time private secretary to Mr. Disraeli, of whom he has some good stories to tell, and he has much to say about the celebrated "Bob Lowe," whose notorious "match tax" has lately been passed by Mr. McKenna. For over twenty years Sir Rivers Wilson was the head of the National Debt Office, but his most interesting work during that time was when he was specially detached for financial diplomacy in Egypt, and his account of his difficult dealings with the Khedive Ismail Pasha brings much that is new to light. It is particularly relevant at the present time, when Prince Hussein, the son of Ismail Pasha, has been established as independent Sultan of Egypt under the British Protectorate. Sir Rivers gives us most entertaining chapters on Ferdinand de Lesseps, le Grand Français, whom he knew intimately, and on many other Parisian celebrities of later days. At the age of sixty-four Sir Rivers became connected with America, first through C. P. Huntington and the Central Pacific Railway, then as President of the Grand Trunk Railway, which he raised to a position of great prosperity. All this he tells in a modest and unassuming way, with many touches of humour. His style is "chatty" and genial, and it is obvious that Sir Rivers Wilson was a man of few enemies and many friends.

LONDON: EDWARD ARNOLD, 41 & 43 MADDOX STREET, W.

FROM SAIL TO STEAM.

NAVAL RECOLLECTIONS, 1878-1905.

By ADMIRAL C. C. PENROSE FITZGERALD,

AUTHOR OF "MEMORIES OF THE SEA."

With numerous full-page Illustrations. Demy 8vo. **12s. 6d. net.**

Admiral Fitzgerald's life has been an exceptionally full and varied one, and whether he was afloat or ashore, engaged in his professional duties, or enjoying a strenuous sporting holiday, he is always interesting, because whatever he turned his hand to—work or play—he did it with all his might. Of the active work at sea which is comprised in the present volume, perhaps the most remarkable portion is the cruise with the squadron which accompanied the *Bacchante* when King George and his brother made their memorable voyage—not round the world. If any tour was likely to be carried out according to prearranged plans, one would have said it was this one, and the story of the vicissitudes in its progress and programme is curious and highly instructive.

On shore, Admiral Fitzgerald was at one time in charge of the Royal Naval College, and for two years Superintendent of the Pembroke Dockyard, entertaining in the latter capacity a number of distinguished visitors, among them the ill-fated Admiral Rosjesvenski. He was more than once stationed in the Mediterranean in circumstances which enabled him to take ample advantage of the wonderful sporting opportunities then available. Among his most attractive chapters are those which describe the shooting—woodcock, duck, wild-boar, etc.—in Albania, Syria, and Turkey; and he has a rare knack of conveying much of his own whole-hearted enjoyment to the reader.

He is almost apologetic with regard to his passion for sport, and, indeed, admits that in the eighties the navy suffered somewhat from a tendency to rest on its laurels and take things easily. Much more did this tendency affect those in charge of affairs at home, the politicians—a class whom the Admiral, quite irrespective of party, holds in very low esteem. The remaining principal section of the book describes the stages in the struggle against this tendency, initiated by Admiral Fitzgerald and a few other far-seeing men, fortunately not too late.

THE REMINISCENCES OF LORD O'BRIEN,

CHIEF JUSTICE OF IRELAND.

Edited by his Daughter, Hon. GEORGINA O'BRIEN.

One Volume. With Portrait. Demy 8vo. **10s. 6d. net.**

Not many bodies of men have a more distinguished tradition than the Irish Bench and Bar, and among the legal luminaries of Ireland in recent years there was no more representative and characteristic figure than Lord Chief Justice O'Brien. After his retirement he occupied his leisure in putting together his reminiscences. They were unfortunately left unfinished at his death, but have been edited and completed with the fullest knowledge and sympathy by his daughter, the Hon. Georgina O'Brien.

He has much to say of sport, of youthful frolics, and of prominent figures in the social life of Dublin, but the main interest of the book lies, as was to be expected, in his professional recollections. These include the trials arising out of the Phœnix Park murders, and those which followed another no less sombre tragedy—the Maamstrasna massacre; but for the most part they are of a more cheerful character. The impress of a vigorous and intensely independent personality is stamped on every page, and few people could attain to the detached serenity with which he records the bestowal of the once well-known sobriquet of "Peter the Packer."

A NEW NOVEL BY FORREST REID.

THE SPRING SONG.

By FORREST REID.

AUTHOR OF "AT THE DOOR OF THE GATE," "THE GENTLE LOVER," ETC.

One Volume. Crown 8vo. **6s.**

Griffith Weston is a child with a temperament. With his rather ordinary but quite nice relations he lives in the ordinary world on the usual footing. On his own account he lives another life in a world of his own. Hence minor escapades which alarm and exasperate his governess and his kind but conventional aunt, and which are told with an insight and sympathy that invest their details with indefinable charm. Into this happy young life enters

the sinister figure of the Parish Organist. In him, too, ordinary folk see nothing but a queer-tempered old musician, but he, like Grif, lives in a world of his own, though a very different one, it would seem, from that of the gentle, dreamy boy. The tragedy which ensues may be baldly summarized as follows: The Organist, a homicidal maniac, supposed to be cured, gives form and substance to Grif's other world, and instils into his mind, enfeebled by illness, the suggestion that in it there is another boy, summoning him with a call which is not to be resisted. The maniac's lurid death fails to break the spell which grips the child, and the relief of telling his story to an understanding listener comes too late. To the real nature of the tragedy Grif's own people remain blind to the end. The doctor knows more, but he only sees when he has been enlightened by the third of the outstanding figures in the story, a friend of Grif's elder brother, and a delightful study of the school-boy turned Sherlock Holmes. These two are helplessly aware that the sensitive child has been scared into his grave. Does this exhaust the matter, or is there still more behind? Throughout the story the reader is haunted by a feeling that there *is* another, more elemental, world, peopled by powers both kindly and malign, with which both the dreamy boy and the mad musician have kinship, and by virtue of which the currents of their lives are intermingled. It is this sense of mystery and doom which gives the book its glamour and distinction, and provides scope for Mr. Forrest Reid's elusive and delicate art.

ARBOREAL MAN.

By F. WOOD JONES, M.B., D.Sc.,

Professor of Anatomy in the University of London (London School of Medicine for Women).

With 81 *Illustrations and Diagrams. One Volume. Demy* 8*vo.*

8s. 6d. net.

Put as concisely as possible, the theme of Dr. Wood Jones's book is a demonstration of the fact that Man, the supreme product of Evolution, could only have been developed from animals which had their homes and spent much of their lives in trees; the main point in the argument being that the descendants of primitive animals living on the ground were inevitably doomed to become quadrupeds, and so missed the chance of acquiring the upright posture which is one of Man's distinctive attributes, at the same time paying for more immediate advantages by losing for ever that invaluable organ, the hand.

Stated in these crude terms, the matter might at first sight seem

to be only a chapter, though an important one, in the story of Human Evolution; but before the reader has progressed very far, he will begin to realize that the arboreal habitat is not merely one of the conditions, but the central and dominating factor in the whole process. Not that living in trees was in itself sufficient to determine the line of progress in an upward direction. Many classes of animals lived, as many still live, mainly in trees. Mr. Wood Jones, reasoning on lines which would delight the heart of M. Henri Bergson, shows how and why only one of these classes continuously achieved "the successful minimum of specialization," and moved slowly but surely in a direction which ended in Man, and not in a Lemur or a Sloth.

There is much more in the matter than this, but the whole argument of the book does not admit of being summarized briefly. Much of it is based on data supplied by Comparative Anatomy, of a character which only experts can appreciate, but the author has skilfully and considerately marshalled his material in such a way that the successive steps in the development which he proves to have taken place can be followed and understood by any intelligent layman.

LOVE, WORSHIP, AND DEATH.

SOME RENDERINGS FROM THE GREEK ANTHOLOGY.

By Sir RENNELL RODD, G.C.M.G.,

British Ambassador at Rome.

Author of "Ballads of the Fleet," "The Violet Crown," etc.

Small Crown 8vo. **2s. 6d. net.**

The poems of which some renderings are here offered to those who cannot read the originals cover a period of about a thousand years. The poets of the *elegy* and the *melos* appear in due succession after those of the *epic*. A little gem from Mimnermus (seventh century B.C.) is the first in the collection, and some lines from Macedonius (sixth century A.D.) mark the close. The interpretation of these lyrics has been the author's sole and grateful distraction during a period of ceaseless work and intense anxiety in the tragic years of 1914 and 1915—"yet another proof," says a review in the *Morning Post*, "of the worth of true poetry as manna for the soul in these dread and inexorable days. . . . The little book is like a vase of rose-leaves, faded yet fragrant, which, as you pour them out, whisper sympathy from the dead to the living."

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

BALLADS OF THE FLEET.

By Sir RENNELL RODD.

A New Popular Edition. Crown 8vo. **2s. 6d. net.**

In this edition a new poem, entitled "Inter Arma Silent," is printed as an introduction, and all matter has been eliminated which has not strictly to do with the sea. The volume appears during a struggle even more stern and momentous than that recorded in the Ballads. But the chivalries of the sea and the test of high endurance are the same as in the days of our fathers, and while the Island race endures the spirit of Drake, who sleeps "'neath some great wave," will never call to them in vain.

THE SOUL AND ITS STORY.

By NORMAN PEARSON,

Author of "Some Problems of Existence," etc.

One Volume. Demy 8vo. Cloth. **10s. 6d. net.**

The underlying principle of this book is that the Soul, no less than the body, is a product of evolution, though, unlike the body which perishes, it has a destiny which will endure. The Soul, which has its origin in the dim sentience which accompanies even the lowest forms of life, is identified with the human Self-consciousness. It is carefully distinguished, however, from the Self, which is only one of its partial manifestations. The theory of Materialism is examined and found wanting, and the nature of Matter itself investigated. Following upon this, the book deals with the conditions necessary for the appearance of life and the mode of its appearance. A chapter is devoted to the controversy of the Spontaneous Generation of Life, and the curious process of Heterogenesis. The relations of physical to mental structure are dwelt upon, and the intimate connections of the two orders of development. The difficulties which beset the transition from a subhuman to a human consciousness, and the activities of consciousnesses in a subhuman condition, are discussed at some length. Speech is the distinctive mark of man, but it is shown to be connected with anatomical development and motor activity. Considerable attention is given to Weismann's theory of the non-transmission by heredity of acquired characters, and the theory in its extreme form is rejected as improbable and unproved. This disposes of one of the chief obstacles raised by the Weismann

school to the permanent value of education and the independent evolution of the Soul. There are chapters dealing with Personal Identity, the Relation of the Soul to the Self, the Unity of the Soul—in spite of the marvellous phenomena of multiple personality, and a very interesting discussion on the possible permanency of sex, even in the more spiritual stages of the Soul's future development. The book concludes with some philosophical disquisitions on the nature and method of creation, and the place of the Soul in, and in relation to, the Universe of which it forms part. The author, regarding evolution as a process whose operation extends both to body and mind, repeatedly turns to the facts of physical evolution for hints towards elucidating the obscure course of mental evolution.

THE DAYS OF ALKIBIADES.

By C. E. ROBINSON, M.A.

With a foreword by Professor C. W. OMAN, Oxford University.

With 16 *full-page Illustrations from the Author's Sketches.*
One Volume. Crown 8vo. **5s. net.**

This book gives a series of sketches, in narrative form, illustrating the life of an Athenian citizen during the Peloponnesian War. Nearly all the incidents of both public and private life are covered. Besides witnessing a wedding, a funeral, a dinner-party, and the usual scenes of domestic life in town and country, the reader is introduced to a "Parliament" on the Pnyx, a dramatic festival in the Theatre, a trial in the Law Courts; he may visit a Gymnasium with Sokrates, journey with a pilgrim to Delphi, make the Mystery March to Eleusis, witness a sea-fight with Phormio, and take a hand in the Battle of Delion. A sojourn at Sparta, a celebration of the Olympic Games, and a scene at the Port of Athens, complete the picture.

The thread of the story is woven upon a more or less historical foundation; but the main purpose of the book is rather to give an insight into Athenian manners and customs, and to introduce among the characters types of every sort—the conservative farmer, the smart young aristocrat, the rich merchant, the Spartan, the slave and the philosopher. Local colour is imparted not merely by detail gathered from the Classics and archæological research, but also by descriptions taken from Greek scenery as it is to-day.

In short, the book is intended to give to general readers and to all who are interested in Greece and its history a clear and vivid picture of Hellenic life and culture in the Great Age of Pericles.

LIGHT AND SHADE IN WAR.

By Capt. MALCOLM ROSS,

War Correspondent with the New Zealand Forces.

Author of "A Climber in New Zealand," etc.

and

NOEL ROSS

of "The Times" Literary Staff

(Lately Lance-Corporal with the Anzacs, and Lieut. Territorial Artillery).

Crown 8vo. Cloth. **5s. net.**

The Authors of this book have seen, during the past two years, a great deal of the light and shade of war, the one as a War Correspondent, the other as a soldier, and, latterly, a Correspondent of *The Times*. Some of the war pictures which they give are classics in their way, and such articles as "The Men from the Glen" and "The Last Load" are real literature, and as such worthy of being preserved in the records of the Great War.

Captain Malcolm Ross is well known, not only in his own country, but also in the United Kingdom, as a writer of note, as a keen student of Nature, and as a daring explorer and climber in the Alps of his native land. As a War Correspondent on Gallipoli, in Egypt, and in France, he has earned further distinction by his graphic accounts of events from the battle-fields. His articles have attained a wide popularity in the English and Colonial Press, and have in some instances been translated and republished in the French journals.

Mr. Noel Ross was wounded in the historic landing on Gallipoli after having taken part in the fight against the Turks on the Suez Canal. Discharged as unfit for further service, he again enlisted in England, passed a course at Shoeburyness, and received a commission in the Artillery. As a result of continued trouble from shell shock he had to relinquish his commission. After a few weeks he was taken on the staff of *The Times*, for which journal he has done, and is still doing, brilliant work. He is also a contributor to *Punch*.

A FRENCH MOTHER IN WAR TIME.

By Madame E. DRUMONT.

Translated by Miss G. BEVIR.

Crown 8vo. Cloth. **3s. 6d. net.**

The writer of this frank and simple narrative is the wife of the famous anti-Semite, but the young airman son, to whom she is devotedly attached, is the child of a first marriage. The volume

consists of her diary from July, 1914, to August, 1915. This anxious French mother makes no attempt to represent herself as more heroic than she was or is, and her honesty gives a special value to her picture of the central and really fine figure in the book—that of her son Paul, many of whose letters to her during the war are here given. Among other interesting passages in the book is a description of the scene at the Paris Cabinet Council, when General Gallieni was asked by the Ministry if he would defend Paris.

A YEAR AGO.

BEING "EYE-WITNESS'S" NARRATIVE OF THE WAR FROM MARCH 30TH TO JULY 18TH, 1915.

By LIEUT.-COL. E. D. SWINTON, D.S.O., R.E., and CAPT. THE EARL PERCY.

Paper Covers, **2s. net.** *Cloth*, **2s. 6d. net.**

This volume contains the conclusion of the famous "Eye-Witness's" Narrative from the front, which has now been discontinued. It is reprinted in full from the reports issued by the Press Bureau, and has not hitherto been accessible in a consecutive and complete form. Taken in conjunction with the previous volume published last year by Mr. Edward Arnold, this instalment of "Eye-Witness's" Narrative provides the most valuable current commentary on the events of the war in Flanders which has yet appeared. As time goes on, its accurate and graphic story of the fighting will inevitably be appealed to as the most reliable evidence of what actually occurred whenever diverse theories are at issue. Although units are seldom mentioned by name, officers and men engaged will have no difficulty in identifying the details of their own operations, while the general descriptions of warfare in all its novel phases, from the base to the front-line trenches, contain an immense amount of information that is new and deeply interesting to the civilian reader.

Although the authorship of "Eye-Witness's" Narrative has long been an open secret, Mr. Edward Arnold has now received permission to announce it publicly for the first time, and readers can exercise their ingenuity in rendering to Lord Percy and to the popular author of "The Green Curve" their respective shares in the credit of this admirable work. (*See page* 12.)

THE MIGRATIONS OF FISH.

By ALEXANDER MEEK, M.Sc.,

Professor of Biology, Armstrong College, in the University of Durham, and Director of the Dove Marine Laboratory, Cullercoats.

With 12 *Plates and* 128 *Diagrams and Maps.* xvi+416 *pages.*
Demy 8*vo.* **16s. net.**

This work deals with a very interesting and important subject, which appeals no less to the layman than to the scientific student. The habits of sea-fish have only recently begun to be investigated seriously, but their importance in connection with our great fishing industries can hardly be overestimated. A great deal of information relating to the migrations of fish has already been accumulated, but it is scattered in books and periodicals frequently difficult to obtain. The author has aimed at giving a systematic account of the knowledge acquired, developing at the same time a theory of migrations based upon the various stages in the growth of fish in connection with currents. The book contains descriptions of the spawning habits, the eggs and the young, the passive drift to the feeding grounds, and the distribution of the species due to migrations. Practically all families of fish have been considered, but the important food fishes of the Northern Hemisphere have received specially detailed treatment.

THE PRINCIPLES OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING AND THEIR APPLICATION.

By Dr. GISBERT KAPP.

Professor of Electrical Engineering in the University of Birmingham; Past President of the Institution of Electrical Engineers.

In Two Volumes, fully illustrated.

Volume I.: Principles of Electrical Engineering. This volume will be ready in the autumn of 1916. *Demy* 8*vo.* **15s. net.**

*** *Volume II. is almost completed, and will be ready shortly.*

Recent Books on the War.

Second Impression now ready.

VERDUN TO THE VOSGES.

IMPRESSIONS OF THE WAR ON THE FORTRESS FRONTIER OF FRANCE.

By GERALD CAMPBELL.

Special Correspondent of "The Times" in the East of France.

With Illustrations and Maps. Demy 8vo. **10s. 6d. net.**

"If Mr. Gerald Campbell had only written about such experiences as other visitors to the front have had, his remarkably readable book would have deserved high praise on its merits. But he has done much more than that; he has written of experiences which no other English Correspondent has had, and his book must be placed among the few which are really informing, even to those who are familiar with the facts of the war."—*Spectator.*

"A deeply impressive, well-informed book. Mr. Campbell's book will well repay careful and patient study. It penetrates beneath the surface of the fighting."—*Daily Telegraph.*

"This book contains, so far as we know, the only careful and trustworthy account of those months of intense fighting which has yet been published. Historians will have to turn to these pages for information in regard to many details of the confused events of the early days in this theatre."—*The Times.*

A SURGEON IN KHAKI.

By A. A. MARTIN, M.D., F.R.C.S. Eng.

Sixth Impression. With Illustrations. **10s. 6d. net.**

"A superlatively interesting book."—*Graphic.*

"A book full of life and human feeling. 'A Surgeon in Khaki' will certainly live as a first-class description of a portion of the great war."—*Field.*

"A book of extraordinary interest. There are many stories, grave and gay, in this book, which should be widely read. It is quite a remarkable book and gives a wonderful vision of what war is."—*Birmingham Daily Post.*

WITH OUR ARMY IN FLANDERS.

By G. VALENTINE WILLIAMS.

Second Impression. Illustrated. **12s. 6d. net.**

"Mr. Williams has written an excellent book, one of the most vivid and informing accounts that have yet been produced of our men in the field. Like all good correspondents, he has an eye for significant detail. His knowledge of Germany helps him to many instructive comparisons. He is the master of an easy, vigorous style, which occasionally reaches real eloquence. Above all, he has a great gift of enthusiasm. The book is written in a fine spirit, not captious, or egotistical, or flamboyant, but honest and understanding."—*Spectator.*

"This book is no mere compilation of the day-to-day dispatches from Mr. Williams, but a complete study of the army at work and at play, touched by many a scene of pathos, enlivened by many a page of vivacious anecdote, and marked throughout by keen study of all the phases and problems of the war."—*Daily Mail.*

A SURGEON IN BELGIUM.

By H. S. SOUTTAR, F.R.C.S.,

Late Surgeon-in-Chief of the Belgian Field Hospital.

Popular Edition, Paper Cover, **2s. net.** *Cloth,* **2s. 6d. net.**

"In place of the average piece of journalistic hack-work, we have here a live book, a book with a character and a soul, a book whose literary skill and deep human feeling justify the prediction that it will be found among the few elect records which survive their hour, and are still remembered and consulted in years to come."—*Daily Telegraph.*

"Admirably written and readable from beginning to end."—*Morning Post.*

"Mr. Souttar is a surgeon with a gift for vivid writing. His book is a quite fascinating record of his experience."—*Daily News.*

EYE-WITNESS'S NARRATIVE OF THE WAR.

FROM THE MARNE TO NEUVE CHAPELLE, SEPTEMBER, 1914, TO MARCH, 1915.

By Lieut.-Col. E. D. SWINTON, D.S.O., R.E.,

and Capt. THE EARL PERCY.

312 *pages. Crown 8vo. Paper,* **1s. net.** *Cloth,* **2s. net.**

(*Particulars of the later volume will be found on page* 9.)

"Pending the time when a full history of the European conflict will be possible, there can be nothing better in the way of a brief general survey of the British operations than 'Eye-Witness's Narrative.'"—*Illustrated London News.*

A RUSSIAN CLASSIC OF ENTRANCING INTEREST AND GREAT HISTORICAL VALUE.

YEARS OF CHILDHOOD.

By SERGE AKSAKOFF.

Translated, for the first time, from the Russian by J. D. DUFF, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge.

Demy 8vo. **10s. 6d. net.**

"'Years of Childhood' becomes the more fascinating the more one reads and thinks about it. Aksakoff read a new and ecstatic meaning into things which are banal and tame to most men and women, and the eager eye of his mind scanned deep into the lives and loves of the people round about him."—*Morning Post.*

"A charming Russian book. At this time when so many translations from the Russian are appearing, well advised and ill advised, it is good to be able to put the hand on one superlatively good book. Here is a refreshment for tired eyes and tired souls. It is put into beautiful English."—*Country Life.*

"English readers may well be grateful to Mr. J. D. Duff for his translation of a very unusual book. He promises us a translation of 'A Family History,' which carries on the narrative of Aksakoff's life and gives some account of his family. In the original the two make one book, and all who read this first instalment will welcome the completion of it."—*Spectator.*

Date Due

CAT. NO. 23 233 PRINTED IN U.S.A.

DA 565 .W59 A3
Wilson, Charles Rivers, S
Chapters from my official life
010101 000
0 1163 0216299 9
TRENT UNIVERSITY

DA565 .W59A3
Wilson, Sir Charles Rivers
Chapters from my official life
DATE
ISSUED TO
78974

78974